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No. 5, May 1984

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30 July 1984

USSR REPORT

MILITARY AFFAIRS

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No. 5, May 1984

Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents the following is a complete translation of the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL.

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GREATER UNITY, COOPERATION AMONG WARSAW PACT ARMIES URGED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 84 (signed to press 17 Apr 84) pp 5-14

[Article by Army Gen A. Gribkov, chief of staff of the Joint Warsaw Pact Armed Forces: "Strengthening the Military-Political Unity of the Warsaw Pact Countries at the Present Stage"]

[Text] The new and higher type of international relations free of discrimination, domination and subordination is being demonstrated by the socialist commonwealth countries. These relations are based on ideological unity, a commonness of goals, comradely collaboration, the harmonious reconciliation of national and international interests and the resolving of urgent problems considering the needs of each state. The close cooperation and joint execution of a unified foreign policy redouble the might and authority of the fraternal countries, they increase their impact on the development of world events and contribute to the strengthening of socialist positions in the world. "...The success of the cause of maintaining and strengthening peace," emphasized the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Comrade Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko, at the extraordinary February (1984) Plenum of the Central Committee, "to a significant degree depends upon how great the influence of the socialist countries on the world scene will be and how active, purposeful and coordinated their actions will be."¹ For this reason, the strengthening of the close military-political unity of the Warsaw Pact countries has constantly been at the center of attention for the fraternal Marxist-Leninist parties.

The problem of the unity of the progressive forces of socialism in the struggle against the common enemy holds a special place in the revolutionary theory of the proletariat. Its solution is of great practical significance. The founders of scientific communism pointed to the necessity of a close unity, joint actions and mutual aid of the workers in all countries as an essential condition in the successful struggle for their liberation. "Since the position of the workers in all the countries is the same, since their interests are the same and their enemies are the same," said F. Engels, "should also fight in common and they should oppose the fraternal alliance of the bourgeoisie of all nations by a fraternal alliance of the workers of all nations."²

In internationalism, as an objective pattern in the revolutionary liberation movement, was thoroughly established and developed by V. I. Lenin. He pointed

out that capital is an international force and for victory over it there must be an international worker alliance, their international fraternity. The leader of the proletariat particularly emphasized that "in being confronted with the enormous front of imperialist powers, we who are fighting imperialism represent an alliance which requires close military unity and any attempts to disrupt this unity is viewed by us as a completely inadmissible phenomenon, as a betrayal of the interests of the struggle against international imperialism.... We say: there must be a unity of the military forces and a retreat from this unity is inadmissible."³

These words have assumed particular urgency at the present stage. The increased importance of further strengthening the unity and solidarity of the socialist countries is explainable by the following circumstances.

In the first place, by the increased scale and complexity of the tasks related to building a new society. Their complexity lies not only in the newness and lack of experience but also in the conditions for carrying out the creative plans. The contacts and ties between the socialist countries are constantly growing broader and deeper and this is having an ever-better influence on the development of the national economies and the economic might of the socialist commonwealth as a whole.

In building socialism and communism the fraternal countries must also consider the effect of an external factor. In order to halt the progress of socialism, its enemies are employing a broad range of means from hostile actions of a political and economic sort, boycotts and sanctions, ideological subversion and propaganda aggression up to outright subversive actions.

Secondly, by the need for unified actions among the socialist countries and by the constant desire of the imperialist states to integrate their forces and coordinate actions against real socialism. Their ruling circles very closely coordinate the system of means and methods aimed at undermining the foundations of socialism and weakening its influence in the world. Our class opponents are acting evermore perfidiously and with ever-greater sophistication. Most of all they would like to undermine the trust, spread discord between our peoples and parties and thereby split their unity.

Characteristically, the imperialist countries in the struggle against socialism, the revolutionary and national liberation movement, regardless of the antagonistic contradictions existing between them, as a rule, act as a united front.

The experience of the Warsaw Pact irrefutably shows that due to the unity, solidarity, close collaboration and fraternal mutual aid among its members, the most complex problems of both domestic and international policy are being successfully solved. At present, as never before, it is clear that the path to increasing the might of the socialist countries lies not in isolation and exclusiveness but rather in the further strengthening of their unity. In the nuclear age, national and universal security are inseparable.

Thirdly, the strengthening of unity among the Warsaw Pact countries at the present stage is determined by the vital need to improve their defense capability and increase the combat readiness of the Joint Armed Forces. The militaristic

policy of the United States and the NATO bloc at present has intensified the situation in the world to the limit and has led to a greater threat of a nuclear war. Under these conditions evermore obvious is the fact that not all the socialist countries individually are capable of opposing the united front of imperialism which possesses the most advanced weapons. They can ensure their security and create good conditions for creative labor only by relying on the collective military might of the entire alliance. The coalition nature of modern war, if the imperialists start it, even in peacetime requires early preparations of the allied armies and navies for joint actions against a common enemy.

Fourthly and finally, the necessity of uniting the socialist states is now tied to solving the most vital problem of modern times, the problem of preventing a nuclear war. It would not be an exaggeration to say that such a war would be the severest most monstrous crime against all mankind. It could lead not only to the destruction of world civilization but also to life itself on the earth. In our times to defend peace, to keep mankind from sliding into the nuclear abyss and to put an end to the arms race are possible only under the condition of the unbreakable solidarity and unity of all progressive forces and above all the socialist countries. This was emphasized with particular force in the Prague Political Declaration of the Warsaw Pact States: "The forces of peace are mightier than the forces of war. Everything depends upon their solidarity and purposefulness of their actions."⁴

The questions arise: why now are the peoples so acutely confronted with the problem of preventing a nuclear war and why is mankind now living through the most difficult and dangerous period over recent decades and what has led to the exacerbation of the present international situation? The reason is one: the increased aggressiveness and adventurism in U.S. and NATO policy. Washington is endeavoring at whatever the price to shatter the existing approximate military-strategic equilibrium between the NATO states and the Warsaw Pact countries, to achieve military superiority over them and thereby ensure unchallenged domination in the world for the United States.

In the 1970's, as is known, due to the joint efforts and coordinated actions of the fraternal countries, a balance of forces was achieved between the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. This produced fruit with the recognition of the territorial and political results of World War II. It was possible to achieve certain detente in international relations. Many states and peoples felt its positive effects. The authority of socialism and its attractive force increased significantly. At the same time, imperialism suffered tangible losses. The sphere of its domination and influence was significantly narrowed. Such a development of world events was not to the liking of the imperialist states. They saw the cause of all the troubles in detente and in the "machinations of Moscow."

In endeavoring to recover lost positions, to contain socialism and turn back the development of world events, the U.S. administration which came to power at the beginning of the 1980's in its international relations began to rely on military strength and confrontation. "We should build peace only on the basis of strength.... Peace should be based on strength.... Peace will be lasting if we will be strong" was how the U.S. President Reagan defined his foreign

policy program. The strategic aim of this program was most fully expressed by him in a speech before the English Parliament in June 1982. In it he stated: "Let us cease hesitating and let us use our might so that Marxism-Leninism ends up on the ash heap of history." The "crusade" proclaimed by him against socialism as a sociopolitical system envisages not the rejection of socialism as was proclaimed by the former U.S. administrations but rather its elimination.

What can be said about this? In the first place, imperialism is not omnipotent. Today it does not determine the basic development of world events. Secondly, socialism in our times is not merely a theory but also an objective reality. This is already an entire system of states with enormous economic potential. These involve hundreds of millions of people who themselves want to control their destiny and establish their own social orders which may even not be to the liking of some.

However, we cannot ignore the senseless statements of the U.S. leaders as they are followed by senseless practical actions. This is particularly true of military preparations. The U.S. military expenditures have been undergoing an unprecedented increase. In 1985 the United States plans to allocate 313 billion dollars for this and in 1985-1989, American military allocations will be 2 trillion dollars, that is, almost as much as the Pentagon has spent over the 35 postwar years.

U.S. and NATO nuclear potential is increasing rapidly, work is actively underway to develop an all-encompassing antimissile defense system, and plans are rapidly being worked out to militarize space. New conventional weapons systems are being developed including reconnaissance-attack complexes, and weapons with high accuracy and great range. The groupings of armed forces are being increased in the various regions of the world. Efforts are being made to resurrect Japanese militarism and link it firmly to the North Atlantic bloc.

U.S. military strategy is assuming an evermore aggressive nature. The Secretary of Defense C. Weinberger has described it as a strategy of "direct confrontation" with the Soviet Union on global and regional scales. Concepts have been worked out for "limited," "all-out" and "extended" nuclear wars. The United States has made it no secret that "in the event of necessity" it will make the first nuclear strike and that the Pershing-2 missiles and cruise missiles will make it possible for them to "win a nuclear war."

In December 1983, in speaking in Washington before members of the independent influential public organization, the Carnegie Fund, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Joint NATO Armed Forces in Europe, Gen Rogers, reaffirmed that the principle of being the first to employ nuclear weapons would be crucial in the military doctrine of the NATO bloc regardless of the course of carrying out the programs for increasing the combat might of the general purpose forces.

In recent years, offensive actions have assumed a priority place in the training of the U.S. and NATO armed forces. The great spatial scope of the exercises, the significant number of involved troops, forces and equipment and the proximity of the areas where they are held to the frontiers of the socialist countries give a dangerous nature to the major exercises. Such exercises without preliminary complete deployment of the groupings could develop into large-scale aggression.

The aggressive aspirations of the United States can be seen from the fact that it has independently assumed the right to intervene, including with force, into the internal affairs of other states, to remove regimes not to its liking and institute its own orders. There are numerous facts confirming this. The United States directly or through its satellites has been conducting an undeclared war against the Afghan revolution, together with its allies carried out terror in Lebanon, it is conducting a policy of genocide in El Salvador, it is threatening Nicaragua and Cuba with armed intervention and carried out a bandit attack on the sovereign state of Grenada. Threats have been made against independent Syria. A policy of plunder and international terrorism is leading to a destabilizing of the situation in the world and to increased tension.

The deployment of the new American medium-range missiles on West German, English and Italian territory have caused serious concern and alarm among all people of good will. This act which is hostile to the cause of peace is aimed at undermining the existing approximate balance of military forces, including nuclear ones, between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This balance has objectively ensured European security and stability.

The deployment of the American Pershings and cruise missiles overseas has been justified by the fact that this is supposedly necessary for eliminating some "Soviet monopoly on medium-range missiles" and ensuring their security. However, reality completely repudiates this. Repeatedly using specific figures it has been proven, and many political figures and specialists in the West agree with this, that at present in Europe an approximate equality in medium-range nuclear weapons has been maintained between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, for nuclear charges there is a 1.5-fold superiority on the NATO side.

The American nuclear missiles are being emplaced not to protect Europe, for no one is threatening it. They are designed to make a first nuclear strike against objectives on the territory of the USSR and its allies and this has been directly admitted by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Joint NATO Armed Forces in Europe, Gen Rogers. In terms of the Warsaw Pact countries, these missiles are strategic weapons. In terms of their tactical and technical specifications such as range and speed of flight, power and accuracy of the strike, flight time to the target and other parameters--they have been organically incorporated in the Pentagon scenarios of a nuclear war.

The present desire of Washington to deploy its missiles in Europe is dictated by its desire to establish a nuclear missile base for conducting the declared "crusade" as well as provide its strategic nuclear forces with the opportunity of making a so-called "incapacitating" strike which would deprive the USSR of the ability to make a retaliatory nuclear strike against the aggressor. Let us state straight away that such goals with the present presence and state of the nuclear weapons and control systems are unfounded.

As for the security of the U.S. Western European allies, this, seemingly, interests the American leaders only to the degree that the Western Europeans by their own lives and own cities can reduce the retaliation against the United States itself, if Washington gives in to the enticement of unleashing a nuclear war in the illusory hope of winning it. Hence, here there are no "sincere" concerns of the senior for defending the junior. Something else is quite apparent,

that is putting one's partners under the first retaliatory strike. It is certainly understandable to everyone that the territory which has been turned into a launching position for the missiles will naturally be an objective for an immediate attack.

The unprecedented pace and scale of the U.S. and NATO military preparations and their immediate preparations for war which the entire world has witnessed again and again confirm the correctness of the thesis of Marxism-Leninism that as long as imperialism exists, there will be a threat to the revolutionary victories and universal peace. The fraternal communist and worker parties in their practical activities have constantly been guided by this important conclusion.

Having thoroughly analyzed the existing situation related to the appearance of American missiles in Western Europe, the socialist commonwealth countries in response to the increased nuclear threat have been forced to undertake the necessary measures for defending their own security. These measures are well known. They have been dictated primarily by a concern for peace and should ensure the establishing of the appropriate counterbalance to the increased might of the NATO nuclear weapons in Europe and maintain the balance of forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Life has shown that peace can be maintained only under the conditions of a military equilibrium. For this reason, the socialist commonwealth countries have always been in favor and are in favor of a balance of forces. They have repeatedly cautioned that under no circumstances would they permit a military superiority over themselves. This was stated with complete determination on 28 June 1983 at the Moscow meeting of party and state leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries. Our retaliatory measures will be carried out strictly within the limits which are dictated by the actions of the United States and their henchmen. Our practical actions confirm this.

Certainly the socialist countries do not want to compete in military preparations. This is not our way. Socialism, a society which is confident of its own creative forces, does not require an arms race, let alone a war. We need peace, a lasting peace. "...The Soviet Union," states the Decree of the USSR Supreme Soviet "On the International Situation and the Foreign Policy of the Soviet States," "is not encroaching on the security of any country, either in the West or East. It desires to live in peace with all countries and to carry out the principle of peaceful coexistence among states with different sociopolitical systems."⁵

The numerous constructive proposals of the USSR and other fraternal countries are aimed precisely at maintaining peace. Of particular importance is the obligation unilaterally adopted by the Soviet Union of not being the first to use nuclear weapons. It might be pointed out that, regardless of the sharp exacerbation of the situation related to the deployment of new American missiles in Europe, the given obligation remains in effect.

If the United States and the other NATO countries show a readiness to return to the situation which existed prior to the start of the deployment of the American medium-range missiles in Europe, then the United States will also be ready to do this. New proof of this is the Declaration Condemning Nuclear War adopted

in December of last year upon Soviet initiative at the 38th UN General Assembly Session. The Soviet Union reconfirmed its unswerving, unhesitating adherence to peace at the Stockholm Conference on the Questions of Strengthening Confidence, Security and Disarmament in Europe. The USSR has come out with a broad, constructive program aimed at strengthening peace, preventing nuclear war, improving international relations, reducing the feverish arms race and actually lessening the military stand-off. The ideas and proposals of the Soviet Union on how to block the path to war and more toward peace without weapons are unanimously shared by a majority of the world's states.

The joint efforts by the fraternal countries and their coordinated actions on the world scene have produced results. For 40 years now Europe has been living under the conditions of peace. Our states in the future will focus their collective efforts at ensuring a peaceful future for the present and coming generations. For the sake of these noble goals the Warsaw Pact countries are steadily strengthening their solidarity and unity and deepening all-round cooperation. "For all major problems of socioeconomic development and international policy," as was pointed out at the 26th CPSU Congress, "a fundamental unity of views has been established among us. This is the result of the constant interaction of the fraternal communist parties and our common achievement."⁶

At the present stage, collaboration among the fraternal countries encompasses the most diverse spheres of their social life and different areas of their cooperation in the area of building socialism and strengthening defense. At present this collaboration which has always taken into account the particular features of the present-day international situation and the internal development of each country, is continuing to grow stronger and deeper. This is to the benefit of all the fraternal countries.

The broader relations between the fraternal countries and their close cooperation can be seen in the decisions adopted by them in 1983 at a conference of the Political Consultative Committee [PCC], at a meeting of the party and state leaders of the allied states and at the sessions of the Foreign Ministers Committee and Defense Ministers Committee. These decisions provide the bases for further collaboration in all spheres: political, economic, ideological, defense, in the area of culture, science and so forth. The forms of this collaboration are diverse and all of them contribute to strengthening the unity among the fraternal countries.

The center for political coordination among the Warsaw Pact states is the PCC. At its sessions, after a thorough analysis of the international situation, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and solidarity, a common approach is worked out collectively to the key problems of international relations, the construction of socialism, and strengthening the defense capability of the allied countries; their fulfillment of obligations relating to joint defense is also assessed. Many constructive decisions and proposals of the PCC have formed the basis for documents of major international forums and have been reflected in bilateral state acts.

At the PCC session held in January 1983 in Prague, its members proposed an entire range of initiatives aimed at improving the situation in the world, checking the arms race, lessening tension and developing international collaboration.

Among the peace initiatives, of prime importance is the joint proposal of the fraternal countries to conclude a treaty on the mutual renouncing of force and the maintaining of relations of peace between the Warsaw Pact member states and the NATO member states. If the NATO countries would agree to the proposal of the Warsaw Pact states not to employ military force against one another, this would seriously increase the level of confidence in Europe and throughout the world and in practice would mean that the opposing military groupings would renounce the use of force for resolving disputed questions which arise.

The sessions of the Foreign Ministers Committee are an important form of strengthening the unity of the Warsaw Pact states. This body was established by a decision of the Bucharest (1976) PCC session in the aim of further improving the mechanism of political cooperation. It has significantly increased the stability of relations and the coordinating of actions among the fraternal countries in the foreign policy area. Thus, a session of the Foreign Ministers Committee held in April of last year in Prague examined questions related to carrying out the proposals and initiatives advanced by the PCC in the aim of preventing a nuclear war, the continuation and strengthening of the detente process, a solution to the problems of disarmament, the strengthening of security and the development of cooperation on the European Continent and throughout the world.

In the system of political cooperation among the socialist countries, a major role is played by the sessions of the secretaries from the central committees of the communist and worker parties for international and ideological questions. At these sessions, in a situation of business-like and comradely collaboration, unity and international solidarity, there is an exchange of opinions on the international situation and important tasks relating to political, information and propaganda work under the developing conditions are discussed.

At the present stage, interparty ties are assuming ever-increasing significance in the actual political cooperation and interaction among the fraternal communist and worker parties.

Military cooperation is also an important factor in strengthening the unity of the Warsaw Pact countries. At present, this encompasses virtually all elements of the military mechanism in the allied states. The relations between their armies have been turned into true combat friendship. This has become possible due to the constant concern shown by the fraternal communist and worker parties for developing the national armies and the Joint Armed Forces as a whole and to the close and constant interaction of the joint and national military bodies.

A leading area in military cooperation is the coordinating of plans for strengthening the defense capability of the allied states and improving their armies. The forms and methods of this collaboration and its content depend upon the requirements of collective defense, the development of military affairs and the particular features of the international situation. For example, at present, when the new American missiles are being deployed in Western Europe, an objective need has arisen for the Warsaw Pact countries to adopt compulsory retaliatory measures for further developing and improving the Joint Armed Forces so that they conform to the new nature of military preparations in the NATO bloc and that threat which has formed for the security of the socialist commonwealth

countries. The measures to improve the national armies, to increase their combat capability and readiness are being coordinated on a basis of mutual agreement.

Under the conditions of the intensive development of weaponry, broadening military-technical collaboration is of particular importance. At present, this has assumed a planned and multilateral nature. By coordinating scientific research and experimental design work, cooperation is being carried out in defense production. This has provided not only a significant savings of material resources and money in producing equipment and weapons, their standardization and unification, but also the prompt equipping of the allied armies and navies with new weapons. Due to effective military-technical collaboration, both the national armies as well as the Joint Armed Forces as a whole are presently equipped with everything necessary for repelling possible enemy aggression.

The strengthening of military collaboration among the fraternal countries has been aided by the joint measures in the system of operational and combat training and by elaborating and introducing into military affairs general principles and advanced methods for training and indoctrinating the personnel. The plans of these measures, both current and long-range, are worked out by the Staff of the Joint Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact countries together with the general (main) staffs of the allied armies considering the proposals and requests made by them.

The most fruitful forms of collaboration are the command-staff, troops (fleet) and special tactical exercises and military games, conferences and assemblies for the leadership of the fraternal armies, joint camp assemblies of the units and subunits and so forth.

The joint exercises of the allied troops and fleets are rightly considered the highest form of their training. These make it possible most effectively and comprehensively to train all categories of trainees. The commanders and staffs improve their skills in resolving the questions of preparing and conducting modern operations and combat, in organizing and maintaining close cooperation between the national troop groupings, continuous control and command of the troops and naval forces and so forth. The exercises provide good material for analyzing trends in the development of military art and working out common views on the employment of the troops and naval forces. In the course of them great opportunities are created for instilling a spirit of patriotism and internationalism in the men as well as favorable conditions for them to recognize the need for military service and constant readiness in order to defend the victories of socialism by joint efforts. The friendly meetings of the exercise participants with the population and workers of the allied countries are a demonstration of the true unity of the fraternal armies and peoples and proof of the further strengthening of their solidarity.

Socialist military science plays an important role in solving the problem of the defense capability of the Warsaw Pact states. This must seek out the most effective methods for preparing and conducting an operation and engagement, investigate the prospects for the development of military affairs and ensure the correct choice of defense measures. The military-scientific potential of the Soviet Armed Forces is the basis for carrying out this and other tasks. However,

year by year the contribution of each allied army to military science is becoming ever-weightier.

In the military collaboration of the fraternal countries there is extensive reliance on mutual aid in improving the military personnel training system, in strengthening the ties among the political bodies of the allied armies and in maintaining close contacts between the formations and units from different affiliations and much else.

It is essential to emphasize that the areas, forms and methods of military collaboration among the fraternal armies are constantly being improved and developed. Here of important significance is the fruitful activities of the military bodies of the Warsaw Pact: the Defense Ministers Committee, the Joint Command, the Military Council, the Staff and Technical Committee of the Joint Armed Forces.

All the measures of a military sort being carried out by the Warsaw Pact have been forced upon us. They are dictated by the necessity of strengthening the security of the USSR and its allies and are not aimed at achieving military superiority over the United States and the NATO bloc and do not harm the security of other peoples. They are of a strictly defensive nature and do not exceed the limits of the required, guaranteed defense. However, we need a strong and secure defense capable of thwarting the forces of war, cooling the hotheads of militaristic adventurers and excluding the enticement of testing its strength.

For nearly three decades now the Warsaw Pact has defended peace and socialism. The past years have clearly shown what an influential and beneficial role it has played in international affairs. The combined might of the allied countries have firmly become an insurmountable barrier on the path of the hegemonistic aspirations of imperialism.

The fraternal peoples, the worker peoples from their own experience have been persuaded of the necessity and importance of such an alliance which conforms to their fundamental national and international interests. This experience also shows that under conditions where imperialism, headed by the United States, is increasing its combined military might without restraint in betting on force, when on a global scale it coordinates its actions against socialism, only the unity and solidarity of the fraternal socialist countries and their armies guarantee the sovereignty and security of each individual country and the community as a whole. For this reason, the Warsaw Pact countries are constantly strengthening their unity as a crucial factor in ensuring their security and in maintaining peace in the world.

FOOTNOTES

¹ "Materialy vneocherednogo Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS. 13 fevralya 1984 goda" [Materials of the Extraordinary Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. 13 February 1984], Moscow, Politizdat, 1984, p 18.

² K. Marx and F. Engels, "Soch." [Works], Vol 4, p 373.

³ V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 40, pp 98-99.

⁴ PRAVDA, 7 January 1983.

⁵ Ibid., 30 December 1983.

⁶ "Materialy XXVI s"yezda KPSS" [Materials of the 26th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1982, p 5.

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WORLD WAR II: DEVELOPMENT OF SUCCESSIVE ATTACKS EXAMINED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 84 (signed to press 17 Apr 84) pp 15-23

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Col Gen M. Bezkhrebtyy: "Certain Questions in Preparing and Conducting Successively Deeper Front-Level Offensive Operations"]

[Text] The elaboration of a theory for preparing and conducting successive operations in Soviet military art started at the beginning of the 1920's.¹ In the course of the Great Patriotic War this underwent further development and was confirmed by the practice of numerous front- and army-level operations.

From the experience of the war, successively deeper offensive operations were a series of interrelated operations carried out to exploit an achieved success, for making a decisive defeat against the enemy in the given sector and achieving the ultimate goal of the undertaken advance. Such operations were conducted one after another without operational pauses or separated by short pauses. Successive front-level offensive operations were, as a rule, component parts of strategic operations while army-level ones were part of front-level operations and conducted in accord with their plan.

The necessity for the fronts to conduct several successive offensive operations was caused by the fact that the strategic operation within which these were conducted developed, as a rule, to a great depth and the attaining of its end goals involved defeating large opposing enemy groupings and the strategic reserves it moved up. The possibility of conducting such operations was determined by the overall supremacy in forces over the enemy, by the ability to utilize the achieved results and by the good conditions developing in the course of completing the operation underway as well as by the art of the command, staffs and troops in rapidly maneuvering the resources for carrying out new tasks. Thus, as a result of the counteroffensive at Moscow, by the beginning of January 1942, conditions had developed for developing an offensive both on the former as well as newly opened sectors. Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] considered the developing situation and under its leadership two successive offensive operations were prepared and carried out in January-April 1942: the Rzhev-Vyazma by troops from the Kalinin and Western Fronts and the Toropets-Kholm by the troops of the Northwestern and right wing of the Kalinin Fronts.

Table

Certain Indicators for Successive Offensive Operations*

No	successive offensive operations	1	2	3	4	5		
						6	7	8
1	Zhitomir-Berdichev of 1st Ukrainian Front (24 Dec 43--14 Jan 44)	8-9	9	1 Gds Army, 18 Army, 1 Tk Army, XXV Tk Crps, IV Gds Tk Crps art units		1-2.7	3-4	15-20
2	Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy of 1st Uk. Front (24 Jan-17 Feb 44)	5-7	10	47 Army, 2 Tk Army, mech. corps 1, cav. corps 1		1	1	
3	Proskurov-Chernovtsy of 1st Uk. Front (4 Mar-17 Apr 44)	14	15	4 Tk. Army	rif. div. 17, tk. armies 2, art. reg. 1, units of trps.	1.5-2	2.5-3	5-10
4	Minsk of 3d Belorussian Front (29 Jun-4 Jul 44)	1	no pause	33 Army from 2 Bel. Front				
5	Vilnius of 3d Belorussian Front (5-20 Jul 44)	1	no pause		5 Gds Tk Army, III Gds Mech. C.			
7	Kaunas of 3d Belorussian Front (28 Jul-28 Aug 44)	1	8			to 2.0		

*See: "Sovetskaya Voenennaya Entsiklopediya [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vols. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vols. 4, 8; "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vols. 1, 2, 3; VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, 1964, No 6; 1967, No 4; 1974, No 2; 1978, No 8; D. Z. Muriyev, "Proval operatsii 'Tayfun'" [Failure of Operation "Typhoon"], 2d Ed., Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972; "Razгром nemetsko-fashistskikh voysk na Pravoberezhnoy Ukraine--vtoroy udar 1944 goda" [Defeat of the Nazi Troops on the Right-Bank Ukraine--the Second Strike of 1944], Moscow, Izd. Vyshey veyennoy akademii imeni K. Ye. Voroshilova, 1955.

Key: 1--preparation days; 2--length of operational pause, days; 3--Hq resources turned over to reinforce fronts; 4--intrafront regroupings; 5--supplies of fronts by start of successive operations; 6--ammunition, units of fire; 7--fuel, fuelings, 8--food, daily rations.

The troops of the First Ukrainian Front in the course of liberating the Right-Bank Ukraine after the Kiev Operation successively conducted the Zhitomir-Berdichev (24 December 1943-14 January 1944) and together with the troops of the Second Ukrainian Front, the Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy Operation (24 January-17 February 1944) and Proskurov-Chernovtsy (4 March-17 April 1944) offensive operations.

With the Belorussian Operation of the Third Ukrainian Front, after the Vitebsk-Orsha Operation (23-28 June 1944) carried out the Minsk (29 June-4 July 1944), Vilnius (5-20 July 1944) and Kaunas (28 July-28 August 1944) offensive operations. Other fronts also conducted several successive operations in the course of a general offensive (see the table).

The skillful utilization of the experience acquired by the command and the staffs and the high combat skill of the personnel made it possible to conduct many successive operations by the fronts with brief operational pauses and in a number of instances even without them and to develop the offensive at a rapid pace to a great depth, without allowing the enemy an opportunity to dig in on advantageous lines.

Objectively the operational pauses in the course of the developing front-level operations were undesirable since with the occurrence of each pause the troop offensive was halted and the enemy gained an opportunity to put order in its forces, to take the necessary countermeasures and create a stable defensive front on new lines. However, with the great general depth of the offensive or due to difficult conditions in its development, the need arose for the front to replenish its forces from the Headquarters reserves, to organize all-round support and re-establish the lines of communications. In these instances the subsequent operations commenced, as a rule, after pauses the length of which from the experience of the investigated operations was from 8 to 15 days.

The length of the pauses between the successive operations was determined by many factors. The main ones were: the state of the front's troops, the presence of reserves and material supplies, the nature of enemy counteractions as well as the time required for the advancing side to establish a grouping of forces and prepare thoroughly for the new operation, if for various reasons this had not been done in the course of the preceding combat. For example, in the Proskurov-Chernovtsy Operation, an operational pause of 15 days was caused by the necessity of regrouping the 3d Guards Tank Army under conditions of the spring mud over a distance of around 150 km and the 4th Tank Army over a distance of 300-350 km.²

It must be pointed out that during the period of developing operational pauses, the first echelon troops of the fronts sometimes continued conducting offensive operations on individual sectors in order not to allow the stabilizing of the enemy defensive front and thereby create better conditions for developing the new offensive operation. For example, the troops of the Third Belorussian Front on 20 July 1944 completed the Vilnius Operation while its 39th and 5th Armies continued active offensive operations.

The experience of the war showed that the achieving of the goals of the successive front-level offensive operations depended largely upon the promptness,

completeness and carefulness in the advanced carrying out of all measures related to their preparation. It must be considered that for conducting subsequent operations during the first period of the war, the fronts were not allocated a sufficient amount of resources and this deprived the command of the operational field forces of the ability to create the required superiority over the enemy in the sectors of the main thrusts. Due to the lack of second echelons and reserves, the efforts of the advancing troops could not be promptly increased by committing fresh forces. The fronts and armies did not have large formations of armored troops while the mobile groups of the fronts organized from cavalry and rifle formations and small tank subunits and units were not sufficiently strong for developing the success to a great depth.

Starting with the second period of the war, in planning the strategic offensive operations, they began to plan in advance for the fronts to conduct successive operations with a maximum reduction of the operational pauses between them. For these purposes even in the course of the preceding combat, tasks were set for the following operation and advance orientation of the commanders of the field forces was provided. Specific tasks were set and the necessary supplies of materiel were organized. In a majority of instances additional men and weapons were transferred from the Headquarters reserve to the fronts. For example, for conducting the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation in mid-January 1944, Headquarters turned over to the First Ukrainian Front the 47th All-Arms Army and the 2d Tank Army and the 6th Tank Army was organized. With the start of the Shyauliyay Operation, the First Baltic Front was reinforced with two all-arms armies, a mechanized corps, four air divisions and other formations and units. This made it possible to effectively and thoroughly ready the troops of the fronts for the forthcoming operations and facilitated their planning and execution.

The experience of the war showed that the preparation of successive operations by the fronts represented a very complex process in the activities of the command and the staffs. This was explained primarily by the fact that before conducting a new subsequent operation, the situation in the zone of the front often was complicated and uncertain. In the previous operation the troops still had to carry out a number of tasks involving an advance. For this reason the command and the staffs, simultaneously with organizing the pending operation, were controlling the troops engaged in combat.

The work methods of the commanders and staffs of the fronts in the preparing of subsequent operations and the content of the measures carried out were also largely influenced by the operational position of one's troops, by the nature of enemy actions, the presence and state of the approaching reserves, the manning and equipment levels of the formations, the state of the operational rear, the materiel supplies and lines of communications in the zone of advance.

In anticipation of carrying out new tasks in the fronts, decisions were taken which were issued to the executors, the forthcoming actions were planned, cooperation was organized and in addition the necessary troop groupings were established and materiel brought up for supporting the new operations. However, it must be pointed out that the commanders and staffs of the fronts by the time they took the decision for subsequent offensive operations ordinarily did not possess the situational data needed for finally formulating the overall plan, as it was still hard to determine the strength and position of the troops of the

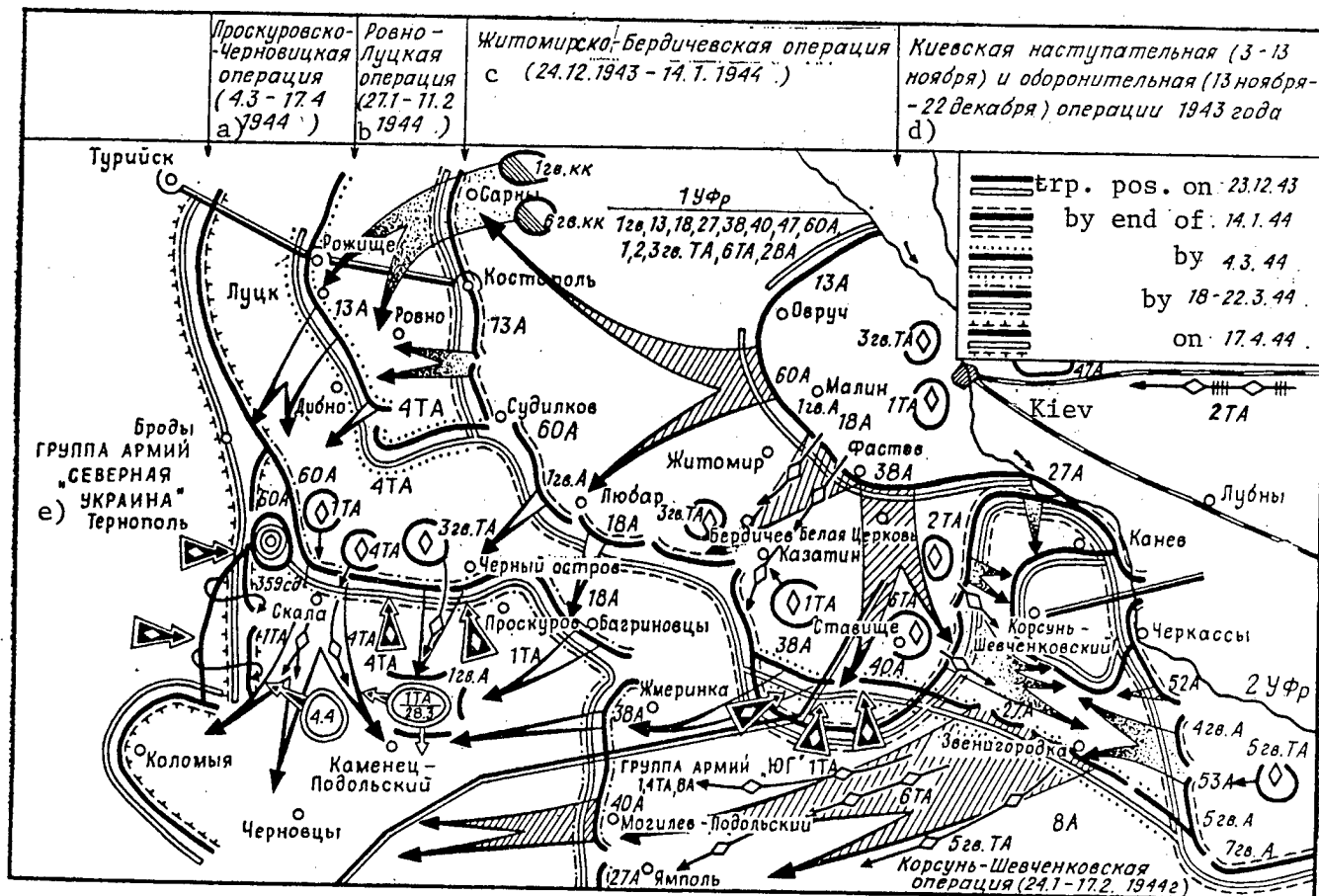


Diagram 1. Successive Offensive Operations of the First Ukrainian Front on the Right Bank Ukraine in 1944

Key: a--Proskurov-Chernovtsy Operation
 b--Rovno-Lutsk Operation
 c--Zhitomir-Berdichev Operation
 d--Kiev offensive (3-13 November) and defensive (13 November-22 December) operations of 1943
 e--Army Group Northern Ukraine

sides, the nature of their actions and the level of combat capability by the start of the new operation. In this context the adopting of decisions required foresight and consideration of possible changes in the situation.

The tasks for the troops initially were given approximately and then clarified as the date for the next operation approached.

The commands and staffs of the fronts usually commenced preparations for the subsequent operation considering that sufficient time was provided for the army commanders to prepare the operations and organize combat operations for the commanders and staffs of the formations and units. Thus, in the course of the Belorussian Operation, the commander of the First Belorussian Front spent up to

24 hours on working out the plan. The remaining time was given to the commanders of the armies, corps, divisions, regiments and battalions.

Of definite interest in preparing for the successive operations was the procedure of their planning. Like the entire process of preparing successive operations, the planning of these was constantly improved. While in the first period of the war, in particular, in the battle of Moscow, in planning subsequent operations, the staffs basically restricted themselves to drawing up the plans on maps or working out the plans in a general form, by the end of the war the staffs had acquired the necessary experience and worked out rather detailed plans both textually as well as on maps with the corresponding explanatory notes.

The planning of subsequent offensive operations in the fronts and armies was carried out, as a rule, in parallel with the taking of the decision to conduct them. This provided the prompt organizing of measures to prepare combat operations and their complete support as well as the most effective employment of the involved men and weapons in the interests of carrying out the tasks set for the front.

The particular features in the planning of subsequent operations consisted in the fact that the tasks, nature and methods of action for the troops were determined approximately in the plan, on the basis of the assumed variations of enemy counteractions. Then as the time for the start of the operation approached, the necessary adjustments were made in it in keeping with the changes in the situation. Consequently, the work of planning the following operations went on continuously until their start.

For planning on the staff of a front they usually assigned a small group of generals and officers and this worked under the immediate leadership of the commander and chief of staff (the Voronezh Front in planning the Voronezh-Kastornoye and Kharkov offensive operations, the Third Belorussian Front in planning the Minsk, Vilnius and Kaunas Operations. The decision of the front's commander and in a number of instances the operational plan were submitted for approval to Hq SHC or to the General Staff.

During the war years, in the course of preparing the subsequent offensive operations, great attention was given to the organizing of cooperation. Here the work methods of the commanders and the staffs were determined chiefly by the particular features of the situation which had developed by the start of the following operation, by the available time, by the chosen method of defeating the enemy, by the time the reserves would be arriving in the operational zone of the front (army) and by the sequence of committing them to battle.

The commander of the front determined the principles of cooperation in taking the decision and then, in setting the tasks for executors, clarified certain questions. If time allowed, cooperation of the troops was organized in detail directly in the field by the commander of the front, the commanders of the armies and branches of troops and by the chiefs of the special troops and services, particularly in the sector of the main thrust. In those instances when the following operations were commenced without a pause, the commander of a front sometimes limited himself to giving instructions on cooperation,

utilizing the communications equipment. In order to make certain that these were correctly understood, representatives of the front field headquarters were sent out to the troops. Sometimes cooperation was organized on terrain mock-ups or on relief maps.

In organizing cooperation in successive operations a great deal of attention was also given to supporting the flanks of the assault groupings. For example, the support for the left flank of the front's assault grouping in the Proskurov-Chernovtsy Operation was entrusted to the 18th and 38th Armies and on the Third Belorussian Front in the Minsk Operation to the 5th and 11th Guards Armies.³

For conducting successive offensive operations, the fronts, as a rule, did not have sufficient resources for organizing assault groupings on the chosen sectors of attack and as a consequence of this were forced to carry out significant regroupings of the field forces and formations and to maneuver along the front. In preparing the Proskurov-Chernovtsy Operation, the commander of the First Ukrainian Front regrouped 17 rifle divisions from the left wing to the right as well as the 4th Tank Army which had been turned over from the reserves of Headquarters, an artillery breakthrough division and a number of other artillery and engineer units. For completing the Vistula-Oder Operation, a major regrouping of forces from the left wing of the First Ukrainian Front to the right was carried out for conducting the Lower Silesian Offensive Operation and after completing it a portion of the troops was again regrouped to the left wing in the aim of conducting the Upper Silesian Operation.

By bold maneuvering, the command of the fronts succeeded at the outset of each subsequent operation in organizing rather strong assault groupings and ensuring the necessary superiority in men and weapons on the chosen sectors. In the Zhitomir-Berdichev Operation, for example, due to the decisive massing of resources on the breakthrough sectors, an operational density was established of 2-3 km per division, around 180-200 guns and mortars and over 20 tanks per km of front (considering the tank armies and the separate tank corps).⁴ In the Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy Operation, as a result of the regrouping, a superiority over the enemy was achieved in the sector of the main thrust of the First Ukrainian Front of almost 2-fold for infantry and 3-fold for tanks and artillery.⁵

Due to the fact that the carrying out of rear support measures required significant time due to the falling behind of the rear services and the lengthening of the lines of communications, the establishing of supplies of materiel for conducting subsequent operations started, as a rule, long before the completion of the operations underway. First of all, such questions were settled as the prompt deployment of the rear bodies in accord with the operation's overall plan, the stockpiling and correct echeloning of the materiel, the preparation of the delivery routes and ensuring rapid issuing of supplies to the troops.

The combat methods of the troops of the fronts varied widely in carrying out the tasks during successive offensive operations. As a consequence of the fact that the enemy, as a result of conducting the first operations, frequently had been significantly weakened and did not have previously prepared defensive lines in depth, combat operations assumed a more fluid nature. At the start of the subsequent operation, sometimes without a pause, pursuit of the individual

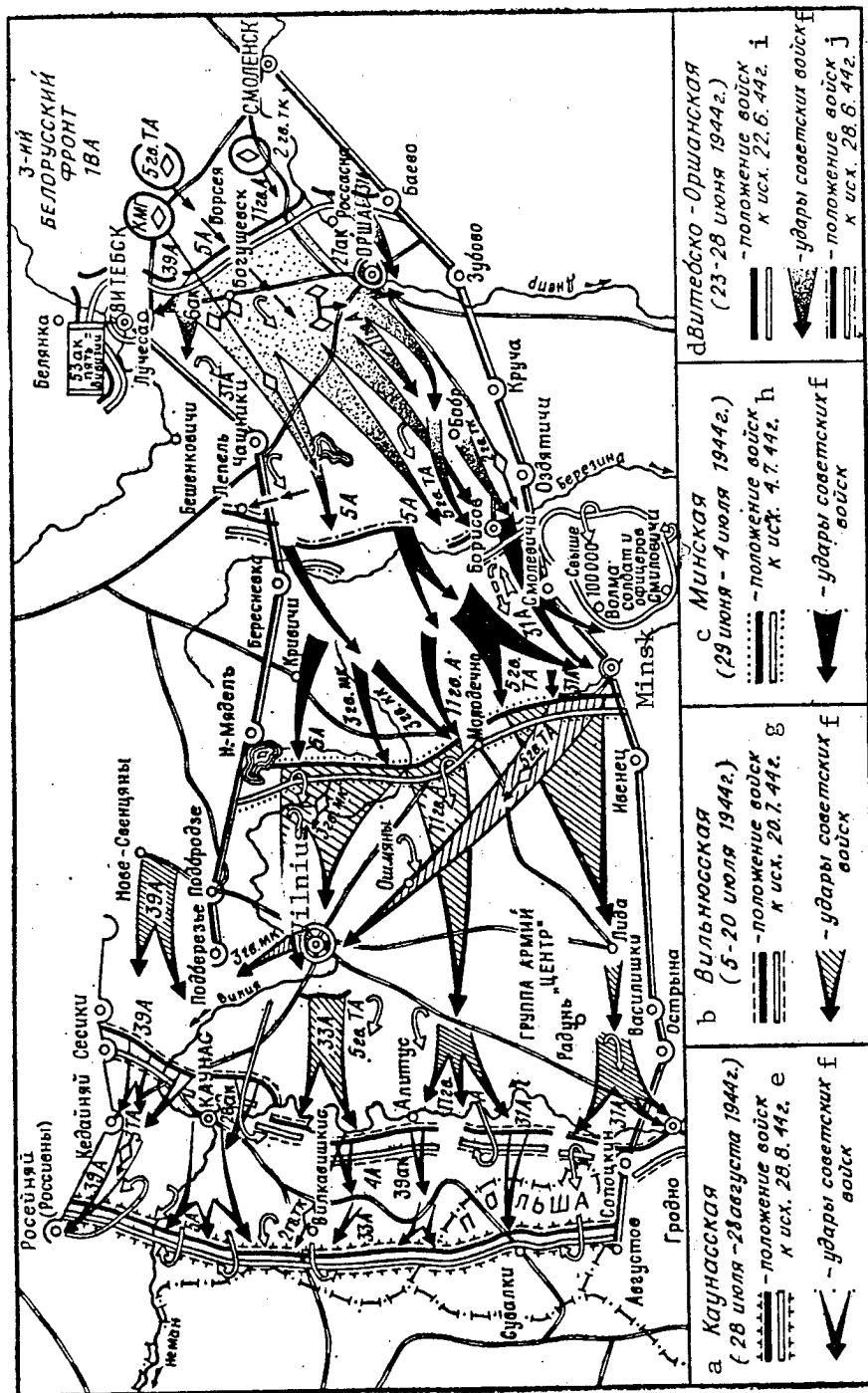


Diagram 2. Successive Offensive Operations of Third Belorussian Front in Belorussian Operation of 1944

Key:

- a--Kaunas (28 July-28 August 1944)
- b--Vilnius (5-20 July 1944)
- c--Minsk (29 June-4 July 1944)
- d--Vitebsk-Orsha (23-28 June 1944)
- e--Position of troops by end of 28 August 1944
- f--Attacks of Soviet troops
- g--Position of troops by end of 20 July 1944
- h--Position of troops by end of 4 July 1944
- i--Position of troops by end of 22 June 1944
- j--Position of troops by end of 28 June 1944

retreating enemy groupings was continued and their defeat in meeting engagements and encounters. When the enemy went over to the defensive on intermediate lines, these were captured without a halt or were broken through after quick preparations. Water obstacles were crossed usually on a broad front employing forward detachments which seized crossings and bridges and supported the deployment and attack by the main forces.

In conducting a subsequent operation, the main thrust was usually made in a sector where the enemy did not expect this and could not quickly increase the efforts of its troops while the offensive by the front's troops could produce a maximum effect. The basic efforts were aimed at defeating the approaching enemy reserves piecemeal and depriving the enemy of the possibility of stabilizing the front on good defensive lines.

Under the conditions of the breakthrough of a hurriedly occupied defense and the continuing pursuit of the enemy, the mobile troops usually were used in the first echelon of the front's assault grouping. This made it possible from the very first days to develop the offensive rapidly. For example, in the Vilnius Operation, the 5th Guards Tank Army in 2 days of advance pushed forward some 70-75 km while the III Guards Mechanized Corps over this same time reached a depth of 40-45 km. The 3d Guards Tank Army in the Proskurov-Chernovtsy Operation during the first 3 days of the offensive fought its way around 100 km.⁶ In the Debrecen Operation, the horse-mechanized group, fighting in the first echelon of the Second Ukrainian Front, on the very first day of the offensive broke through the hurriedly occupied defenses and advanced to a depth of 35-40 km.⁷

In those instances when the successive operations started with a breakthrough of the enemy defenses, the offensive was preceded by artillery and air softening up for the attack. Here the artillery softening up was as brief as possible (in the Proskurov-Chernovtsy Operation it lasted 40-55 minutes,⁸ in the Kaunas Operation some 40 minutes,⁹ and in the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy some 35 minutes).¹⁰ If the forward battalions supported by a portion of the first echelon forces had succeeded in breaking through one or two positions or the entire main defensive zone, the offensive was commenced by the main forces on certain sectors after brief artillery strikes against the disclosed targets.

Thus, on the basis of analyzing the operations examined in the given article as well as others, it can be concluded that the theory and practice of preparing and conducting successive front-level offensive operations during the years of the Great Patriotic War continued to be constantly improved. The theoretical generalizations and practical recommendations on these questions were reflected in the directives of Hq SHC, in individual collections of materials on studying the experience of the war and in certain works. The acquired experience in many areas has maintained its importance under present-day conditions.

FOOTNOTES

¹ VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1983, pp 77-83.

² "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 144.

³ Ibid., pp 140, 343.

⁴ "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 340; VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1967, p 18.

⁵ "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...", Vol 3, p 107.

⁶ VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 4, 1964, p 30.

⁷ "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...", Vol 3, p 591.

⁸ Ibid., p 142.

⁹ "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Vol 4, 1977, p 125.

¹⁰ VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 7, 1969, p 45.

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WORLD WAR II: PREVENTING GERMAN WITHDRAWAL FROM CRIMEA TRACED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 84 (signed to press 17 Apr 84) pp 24-29

[Article by Capt 1st Rank N. Mel'nik: "Checking the Evacuation of Nazi Troops from the Crimea in 1944"]

[Text] As a result of the successful operations of the Soviet troops at the end of 1943 and the start of 1944, on the Right-Bank Ukraine, good conditions were established for liberating the Crimean Peninsula of the invaders.

In giving great military and political importance to the occupying of the Crimea and in continuing to influence their allies and at the same time the general situation in the Balkans, the Nazi Command stubbornly held the peninsula.

The task of holding the Crimea had been entrusted to the enemy 17th Army which after its reinforcing by April 1944, included 12 divisions (5 German and 7 Romanian), 2 brigades of assault guns and various reinforcements totaling over 195,000 men, around 3,600 guns and mortars, 215 tanks and assault guns. It was supported by 148 aircraft based in the Crimea as well as aviation from airfields in Romania.¹ The enemy fleet on the Black Sea had an auxiliary cruiser, 4 destroyers, 3 torpedo boats, 4 minelayers, 3 gunboats, 28 torpedo launchers, 14 submarines and over 100 artillery and landing barges and other small ships. For transporting troops and cargo, there were 18 large transports, several tankers, 100 self-propelled landing barges and numerous small vessels with a total displacement of over 74,000 tons.²

The spite to liberate the Crimea developed into an independent strategic operation. Its overall plan envisaged: by simultaneous attacks by troops from the Fourth Ukrainian Front (commander, Army Gen F. I. Tolbukhin) from the north and the Separate Maritime Army (commander, Col Gen A. I. Yeremenko) from the east on the general axis of Simferopol, Sevastopol with the aid of the Black Sea Fleet (commander, Adm F. S. Oktyabr'skiy) and the Azov Flotilla (commander, Rear Adm S. G. Gorshkov) to surround and destroy the enemy grouping, without allowing its evacuation from the Crimea.

The Fourth Ukrainian Front made the main strike from staging areas on the southern bank of the Sivash to Dzhankoy, the capturing of which would open up free actions toward Simferopol and the Kerch Peninsula into the rear of the enemy

grouping located there. The Separate Maritime Army was to break through the enemy defenses to the north of Kerch, the main forces were to advance on Simferopol, Sevastopol and a portion along the southern shore of the Crimean Peninsula.

The main task of the Black Sea Fleet in the operation was to disrupt the enemy sea lines of communications with the Crimea. The fleet was also used in assisting the ground troops with its aviation and in the coastal areas by the fire of the ship artillery. The Azov Flotilla was to assist in the offensive of the Separate Maritime Army and ensure all shipments across the Kerch Strait in its interests.

The Crimean partisans were given the task of wearing down the enemy rear services, disrupting their command, impeding the organized retreat of the Nazi troops and obstructing the operation of the ports on the Southern Shore of the Crimea.

By the start of the operation, the Fourth Ukrainian Front and the Separate Maritime Army had 470,000 men, 5,982 guns and mortars, 559 tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount]. These were supported by 1,250 aircraft from the 4th and 8th Air Armies.³ The Black Sea Fleet included: a battleship, 4 cruisers, 6 destroyers, 29 submarines, 22 patrol boats and minesweepers, 260 other ships as well as 642 aircraft.⁴

The coordinating of actions of the involved forces was entrusted by the representatives of Headquarters, Mars SU A. M. Vasilevskiy and K. Ye. Voroshilov.

On 8 April 1944, the troops of the Fourth Ukrainian Front, after heavy artillery and air softening up, went over to the offensive. On the Perekop Isthmus the formations of the 2d Guards Army with the support of aviation and the Black Sea Fleet, in the course of 2 days' of hard fighting broke through the main defensive zone but their further advance was temporarily stopped ahead of the Ishun positions. The troops of the 51st Army advancing from the Sivash staging area, by the end of 10 April had broken through the enemy defenses. The XIX Tank Corps which was committed to battle on the morning of the next day without a halt captured Dzhankoy and continued the drive toward Simferopol. This forced the enemy to begin to retreat. During the night of 11 April, the Separate Maritime Army went over to the offensive. On 12 April along the entire front pursuit of the Nazi troops retreating toward Sevastopol had commenced.

By coordinated attacks from the north, east and southeast, the troops of the front stormed the city and on 9 May completely liberated it. Remnants of the defeated formations of the enemy 17th Army were retreating to Cape Khersones. Under the conditions of the isolating of the enemy grouping from the land, the Nazi Command made an attempt to evacuate the troops which had survived the rout.

In the developing situation, important significance was assumed by the coordinated actions of all the men and equipment aimed at checking the evacuation of the remnants of formations of the enemy 17th Army from the Crimea. The chief role in carrying out this mission was given to the diverse forces of the Black Sea Fleet, to the long-range and frontal [tactical] aviation as well as to the artillery capable of attacking the enemy lines of communications, ports and piers.

The basic force in defeating the enemy convoys at sea was the naval aviation (commander, Lt Gen Avn V. V. Yermachenkov). It destroyed enemy transports and ships in bases and at sea, it laid minefields in the area of Constanta, Sulina and on the approaches to Sevastopol, it conducted reconnaissance and guided submarines and torpedo boats to enemy convoys during the day and at night. Involved in combat were around 400 aircraft (including 12 torpedo planes, 45 bombers, 66 ground attack planes and 239 fighters).⁵ More than 200 aircraft from the area of Skadovsk were aimed at attacking the enemy lines of communications in the northwestern part of the Black Sea. Aviation was also used to fight enemy navigation along the southern coast.

During the first days of the operation, the aviation of the Black Sea Fleet and the frontal aviation attacked enemy accumulations in the areas of Armyansk, Ishun and Kerch as well as boats at Feodosiya and Sudak.

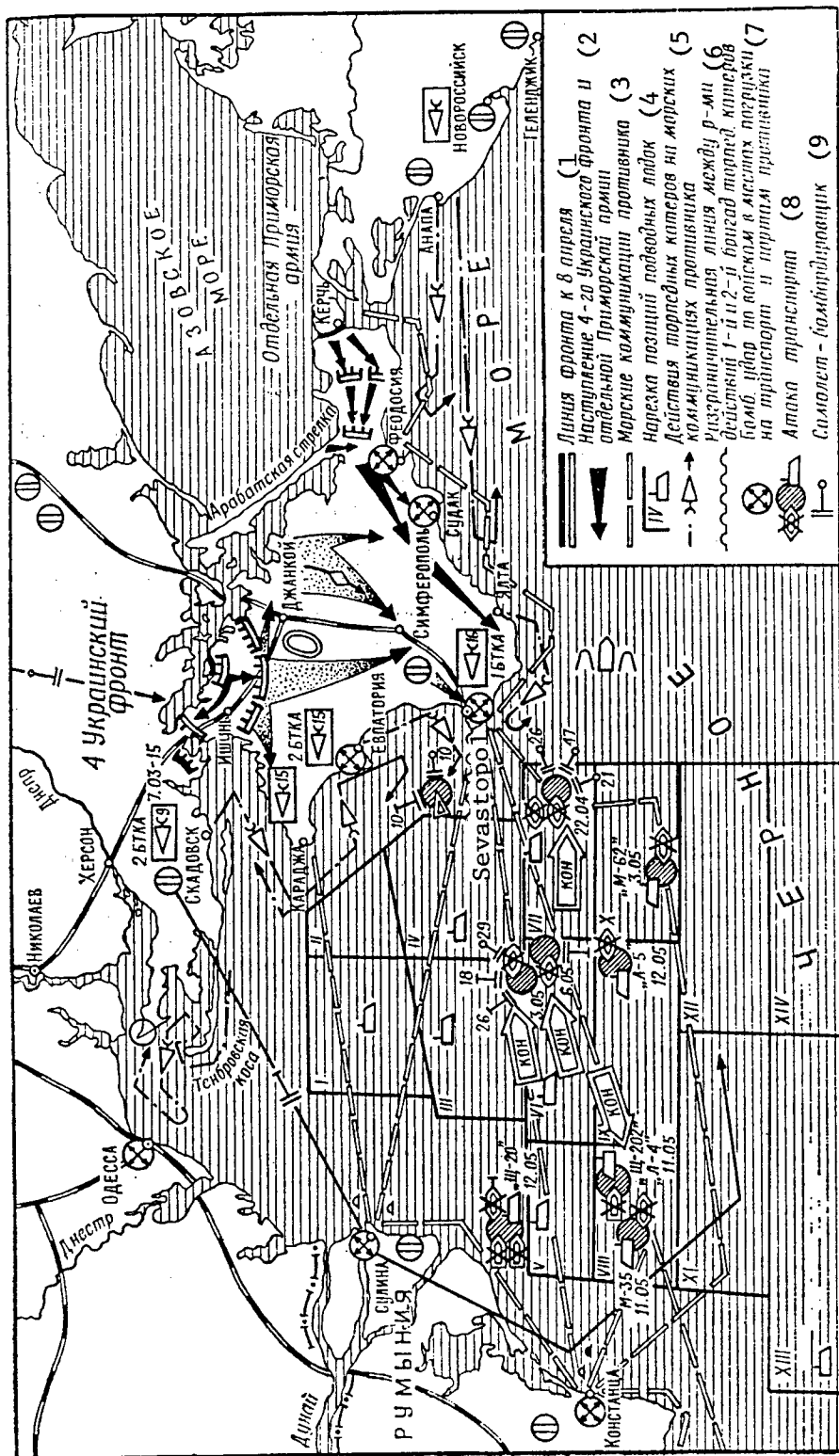
The Naval Air Force attacked the enemy in close cooperation with the units and formations of the 4th Air Army (commander, Col Gen Avn K. A. Vershinin) and 8th Air Army (commander, Lt Gen Avn T. T. Khryukin).

The aviation destroyed ships and vessels at the Crimean ports and at sea by making concentrated attacks basically during daylight hours. For example, on 11 April the Port of Feodosiya was attacked by our aviation for several hours. As a result, the attempts by the Nazis to begin evacuating troops from the city was stopped.⁶ On 13 April, aviation made a concentrated attack against an accumulation of enemy transports and troops preparing to leave the Port of Sudak and it sank three self-propelled barges and damaged five.⁷ This attack forced the Nazis to break off the loading. The Romanian and German soldiers abandoned a portion of the equipment and fled in the direction of Alushta.

On distant lines of communications, combat was carried out by making combined attacks by torpedo planes and bombers. The torpedo planes were employed according to the cruising ("free hunting") method individually and in pairs both during the day and on a moonlit night. Ground attack planes operated successfully against transports. They achieved a high percentage of hits, using the masthead method of bombing (the bombs were dropped from a height of 20-40 m and hit the vessels after ricocheting off the water surface). They sank six of the detected transports.⁸

Along with concentrated air strikes, echeloned operations were also employed. As a total in the operation, in the interests of preventing the evacuation of the Nazi troops, 7,489 aircraft sorties were made, with the Black Sea Fleet air forces making 4,506 (60.1 percent), the 4th and 8th Air Armies made 1,764 (23.6 percent) and the ADD [long-range aviation] formations making 1,219 (16.3 percent). Over this period aviation destroyed 65 enemy ships and vessels and damaged 55.

The successful air operations to disrupt the enemy lines of communications were achieved by careful reconnaissance, by carefully choosing the base areas, by allocating the missions by lines between the different types of aviation and by their coordination which ensured extended and effective actions against the enemy.



Operations of Black Sea Fleet on Maritime Lines of Communications of Crimean Enemy Grouping of 8 April-12 May 1944

- Key: 1--Front line by 8 April
 2--Offensive of Fourth Ukrainian Front and Separate Maritime Army
 3--Enemy sea lines of communication
 4--Stations of submarines
 5--Operations of torpedo boats on enemy lines of communication
 6--Demarcation line between areas of first and second torpedo boat brigades
 7--Bomb attack against troops at transport loading points and against enemy ports
 8--Attack on transport
 9--Bomber aircraft

The torpedo boat formations were given the mission of destroying the enemy transports on the lines of communication off the southern coast of the Crimea and at unprotected roadsteads in cooperation with ships, submarines and aviation. The torpedo boats ordinarily went to sea at night, as in the darkness it was easier to avoid encountering enemy aviation and simpler to organize ambushes and traps for the enemy vessels.

The launches traveled in groups to the search area. Upon reaching a certain point they split up in pairs, they searched the designated quadrants or waited for the enemy with engines muffled. Having detected the enemy ships, they attacked them from a range of 3 or 4 cable-lengths. Prior to setting to sea, the launches were provided with air reconnaissance data. At times they were guided to the target by aircraft which dropped illuminating flares. The search groups also included launches armed with rockets. This weapon was used very effectively and contributed to the successful breaking through of the torpedo boats to the defended transports and vessels.

During the night of 9 May, a group of boats (three torpedo and one gunboat) under the overall command of the division commander, Capt 3d Rank A. P. Tuul', detected three enemy escort vessels but refused to engage them. The division's commander was hoping to find transports with ships. Soon thereafter they discovered a convoy (around 30 vessels and ships). The forces were unequal but nevertheless the commander decided to attack the enemy. Having closed into a short range and selected the targets, the boats one after another went into the attack. By accurate torpedo launches, they sank three large self-propelled barges with Nazis who were endeavoring to escape from Sevastopol. In addition, the boat of Jr Lt F. P. Bublik sank an escort boat. The blockade actions of the torpedo boats at night on the approaches to Sevastopol forced the enemy to operate in this area more frequently during the daytime and this facilitated the operations of our ground attack planes.

The attacks, as a rule, were a surprise for the enemy and most often it opened up artillery fire after the launching of the rockets and the releasing of torpedos from our boats. Surprise made it possible for the boats to attack the target from a short range (not over 1.5-3 cable-lengths) and this ensured a high percentage of hits even in firing one torpedo. During the period of operations to prevent the evacuation of the Crimean enemy troop grouping, 57 torpedos were launched and the basic portion of these (63-66 percent) hit the target.¹⁰

The submarines carried out intense operations on the sea lines of communications. A brigade of submarines (commander, Rear Adm P. I. Boltunov) had the mission together with aviation of destroying enemy transports and ships on the lines of communications in the northwestern and western parts of the Black Sea. The carrying out of this mission involved 13 submarines, 7-9 of which were constantly operating on the sea lines of communications.¹¹

The position-maneuvering actions from several positions were the basic method in the combat employment of the submarines. Its essence was that in the event of a change in the route of convoys, one or another submarine according to the air reconnaissance data moved to a previously chosen position with more intensive enemy ship traffic. Within their positions the submarines independently searched for convoys. This method made it possible with the available submarines to operate against the enemy along the entire extent of its lines of

communications on the Black Sea. The submarines searched for the enemy both independently and also upon guidance from the air reconnaissance aircraft. If the submarines detected convoys or individual ships, the information was transmitted to the command of the torpedo boat brigades, the aviation and neighboring submarines. As a result of the cooperation, the effectiveness of their operations increased. Thus, according to the air reconnaissance data, 32 times they reached the courses of enemy convoys and 19 times were guided there by adjacent submarines.

The effectiveness of sub operations was largely aided by the method of "ripple firing in a fan" with the simultaneous launching of 2-4 torpedoes. Here the range of firing ordinarily did not exceed an average of 2-6 cable lengths.

It must be pointed out that the fleet submarines during this period had to operate under conditions of strong antisub defenses of the enemy convoys. But they skillfully broke through the antisub defenses and with accurate torpedo launches during the day and night sank the enemy transports and ships. The crews of the submarines A-5 and Shch-201 most distinguished themselves. The submarine A-5 (commander, Capt Lt V. I. Matveyev) on 14 April sunk a high-speed enemy barge, on the 25th it attacked 2 enemy gunboats¹² and on 12 May a transport and a barge.¹³ As a total in the course of the operation, the submarines had 52 combat encounters and conducted 25 torpedo attacks. They destroyed 8 transports and 5 escort ships and damaged 2 enemy transports and a fighting ship.

The rapid offensive actions by the troops of the Fourth Ukrainian Front and Maritime Army (in the concluding stage of the operation) completely thwarted the evacuation of the enemy units and subunits. Thus, on 12 May, the troops of the Fourth Ukrainian Front broke through the last enemy defensive line into the Crimea, they captured 21,000 enemy soldiers and officers which had not been evacuated and seized a large amount of equipment and weapons.

During the night of 12 May, an enemy convoy consisting of the large transports "Totila," "Thea" and several landing barges was the last to reach Cape Khersones. At dawn, having loaded each 5,000-6,000 men, the "Totila" and "Thea" headed back to Constanta. But our naval aviation sunk them.

During the period of the evacuation of the enemy troops from the Crimea, 102 different ships and vessels (transports, landing barges, schooners, launches and other ships) were sunk and more than 60 were damaged, that is, out of every 10 ships and vessels engaged in the evacuation, 8 were sunk or sustained damage.¹⁴ The enormous enemy losses in the attempts to escape by sea to the ports of its allies are also confirmed by the data of the German-Romanian Command. According to the operational summaries of the staff of the 17th Army, just from 3 through 13 May, some 37,000 German soldiers and officers and around 5,000 Romanian ones were lost at sea.

Thus, the Soviet troops and naval forces, as a result of the coordinated attacks on land and at sea, prevented the evacuation of the enemy, in a short period of time they completely defeated the enemy grouping and liberated a strategically important area, the Crimean Peninsula. In the course of the Crimean Operation, great experience was gained in organizing and maintaining close cooperation between the ground forces, the fleet and aviation in the struggle to eliminate a large maritime enemy staging area.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 8, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 104.
- 2 Ibid., p 149.
- 3 Ibid., p 105.
- 4 Ibid., p 150.
- 5 TsVMA [Central Naval Archives], folio 10, file 12830, sheets 128-130.
- 6 "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Vol 4, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, p 453.
- 7 TsVMA, folio 10, file 18253, sheet 209.
- 8 Ibid., file 12830, sheet 133.
- 9 [Not in text]
- 10 TsVMA, folio 10, file 18253, sheets 145-146.
- 11 V. I. Achkasov, N. B. Pavlovich, "Sovetskoye voyenno-morskoye iskusstvo v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Soviet Naval Art in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1973, p 314.
- 12 P. Bolgari, N. Zotkin, et al., "Chernomorskiy flot. Istoricheskiy ocherk" [The Black Sea Fleet. Historical Essay], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1967, p 267.
- 13 "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy...", Vol 4, p 454.
- 14 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 8, p 152.

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PARTISAN OPERATIONS IN CRIMEAN OPERATION EXAMINED

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[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col A. Knyaz'kov: "Partisan Operations in the Course of Preparing and Conducting the Crimean Offensive Operation"]

[Text] As a result of the Melitopol Operation (26 September-5 November 1943) and the Kerch-Eltigen Amphibious Operation (31 October-11 December 1943), the troops of the Southern (from 20 October the Fourth Ukrainian) and Northern Caucasus Fronts invaded the Crimea, they captured staging areas on the southern bank of the Sivash and on the Kerch Peninsula and began to prepare an operation for fully liberating the Crimea. At this time around 4,000 partisans comprising 8 brigades (33 detachments) were operating in the rear of the 17th Nazi Army which was locked up in the Crimea.¹

The Nazi Command had assigned the Crimea an important place in the strategic defensive system and was endeavoring to hold onto it no matter what the cost. By the start of 1944, there were five German divisions and seven Romanian ones here, and a portion of these was constantly employed to fight the partisans. Numerous punitive bodies as well as armed detachments organized by the Nazis from among the Tatar bourgeois nationalists and traitors of the motherland operated against the people's avengers. The comparatively narrow and low mountains which were used by the partisans as base areas occupied just 10 percent of the peninsula's territory. At four places these were crossed by improved highways. This significantly reduced the maneuvering abilities of the partisans and forced them often to conduct defensive actions against the punitive troops on a territory limited to several square kilometers; this limited communication and control of the partisan forces.

The Communist Party was the inspirer and organizer of the partisan struggle in the Crimea, as throughout the country. The Crimean party obkom (Obkom First Secretary V. S. Bulatov), in carrying out the directives of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee, did great work to further develop the partisan and underground struggle in the enemy rear. By a decision of the party obkom, in August 1943, there was established and began operating the Crimean Oblast Underground Party Center consisting of P. R. Yampol'skiy (secretary), N. D. Lugovoy, Ye. P. Kolodyazhnyy, Ye. P. Stepanov and others and

then the Simferopol City Underground Committee of the VKP(b) headed by I. A. Kozlov. The party obkom bureau thrice (29 January, 11 February and 3 March 1944) discussed the question of the work of the party organizations in the partisan formations. For strengthening them, a large group of responsible party workers was sent into the enemy rear, including the second secretaries of the Sudakskiy and Sakskiy party raykoms, the first secretary of the Sevastopol Komsomol gorkom and others.²

During the period of preparing for the Crimean Offensive Operation, the party underground widely developed party political work among the partisans and the populace. It had a militant, offensive nature and was closely linked to the situation on the front and to the status on the occupied Crimean territory. Under its beneficial influence and as a result of the victories of the Soviet Army, the front of the partisan and underground struggle was significantly widened. Just during the last 3 months of 1943, hundreds of new fighters joined the Crimean partisan detachments. The number of detachments continued to grow in 1944, too.

The Crimean partisan detachments in operational terms were under the command of the Separate Maritime Army (OPA).³ Direct leadership over them was provided by the Crimean Staff of the Partisan Movement (KShPD) headed by the first secretary of the Crimean party obkom. Together with the OPA military council, the KShPD did extensive work for the organizational and combat strengthening of the partisan formations. In particular, in January-February 1944, with the start of a new stage in the struggle in the enemy rear, the KShPD united the partisan brigades into three formations (Northern, Eastern and Southern).⁴ This was to strengthen the combat capabilities of the Crimean partisans.

The Southern Formation (commander M. A. Makedonskiy, commissar M. V. Selimov) consisting of the 4th, 6th and 7th Brigades (over 2,200 men) was located in the mountains and forests in the region of Simferopol, Yalta and Bakhchisaray. The Northern (commander P. R. Yampol'skiy, commissar N. D. Lugovoy) consisting of the 1st and 5th Brigades (860 men) was in the Zuyskiye forests on the northern slopes of the Crimean Mountains along the valleys of the Burul'cha and Sulat Rivers. The Eastern Formation (commander V. S. Kuznetsov, commissar R. Sh. Mustafayev) included the 2d and 3d Brigades (680 men). It was located in the mountain forest areas to the south of the Staryy Krym and Karasubazar.

All three formations had air drop points and the Southern and Northern also had landing areas for planes. They were in contact with the KShPD by dependable two-way radio. The partisans were supplied with freight by two air regiments from the 4th Air Army: the 2d Air Transport Regiment of the 1st Air Transport Division (LI-2 aircraft) and the 9th Separate Air Regiment of the GVF [Civil Air Fleet] (PO-2 and R-5 aircraft).

In order to better organize cooperation with the Soviet Army units, the KShPD carried out a repositioning of the partisan formations. They were brought closer to the major military installations and basic lines of communications over which the enemy was maneuvering, supplying the troops and carrying out the evacuations. The KShPD coordinated the partisan attacks with the operations of the Soviet troops.

During the night of 27 March 1944, six detachments from the 2d and 3d Partisan Brigades (commanders P. K. Kotel'nikov and A. A. Kulikovskiy) from the Eastern Formation attacked the enemy garrison at Staryy Krym and its suburb Bolgarshchina where there were up to 1,300 Nazis. These forces were to protect the major highway linking Simferopol, Feodosiya and Kerch. As a result of the surprise and decisive partisan actions, the enemy garrison was caught by surprise and defeated. The partisans destroyed 2 tanks, 16 vehicles, a dump with weapons and ammunition, it destroyed the buildings of the city police and post office, it knocked out the prison security and liberated 46 political prisoners. The enemy lost 200 soldiers and officers killed and around 90 wounded.⁵

Three detachments from the 7th Brigade (commander P. K. Gruzinov) of the Southern Formation in February 1944 defeated a large enemy garrison (over 400 Nazis) in the village of Foti-Sala (Golubinka). In the combat the Nazis lost up to 80 soldiers and officers, 2 guns, 2 machine guns, 2 motor vehicles and telephone and telegraph communications were knocked out between the enemy garrisons in the population points of Foti-Sala, Kokkozy and Albat.⁶

Simultaneously with attacks on enemy garrisons, the partisans significantly intensified their sabotage activities on the lines of communications. Trains were derailed, bridges blown up, communications interrupted and motor transport destroyed. The Crimean underground groups also intensified sabotage on transport. The underground at the Simferopol Railroad Station was particularly active. A group of demolition workers under the leadership of V. K. Yefremov here carried out 22 major sabotages. One of the trains mined by them and carrying ammunition was blown up at Kara-Kiyat Station (Bitumnaya).

The command of the Fourth Ukrainian Front and the OPA needed reliable information on the nature of enemy defenses and forces as well as the enemy intentions. Along with the other intelligence bodies, partisan reconnaissance was also engaged in assembling information on the enemy. This was carried out by special reconnaissance subunits and groups. The partisans also obtained valuable information through the agent network of underground organizations operating in the cities. Thus, on the eve of the Soviet troop offensive, information of exceptional importance was received from the Northern Formation. Turned over to the Soviet Command was a map of the Crimea indicating the precise locations of the Nazi troops, with the designating of the defensive lines, command posts and the routes for pulling back the enemy troops in the event of the successful development of the Soviet Army offensive from Perekop and Kerch as well as a plan for the evacuating of Sevastopol. This intelligence data had been delivered to the partisans by the Romanian anti-Nazi, the staff officer of the I Romanian Mountain Rifle Corps, Mikhail Mihailescu.⁷

In monitoring the basic rail and motor lines, the partisans regularly informed the command of the Fourth Ukrainian Front and the OPA of all the more or less significant enemy troop regroupings. Just on the eve of the decisive Soviet Army offensive into the Crimea, the Soviet Command received from the partisans 4,629 radio messages with the last intelligence data.⁸

In viewing the partisans as a dangerous force, the Nazi Command during the winter of 1943-1944 threw against them the Romanian I Mountain Rifle Corps consisting of the 1st and 2d Mountain Divisions. These were supported by tanks,

artillery and aviation. The heavy battles against the punitive troops, although somewhat weakening the partisan forces, could not break their will. In skillfully maneuvering, they themselves often went over to counterattacks, they made daring raids and ambushed the punitive troops.

The partisan struggle was particularly intense during the period of the crucial battles to liberate the Crimea. This was closely tied to the operations of the troops of the Fourth Ukrainian Front and the OPA. The missions carried out by the partisans during this period were determined by a decree of the bureau of the party obkom of 22 February 1944 and by an order of the KShPD of 1 March and concretized by a special order of the commander of the OPA of 8 April 1944. The partisans were to attack the enemy rear, destroy the communications centers and lines, upset command and control, prevent the organized retreat of the Nazi troops, destroy railroads, create slides and ambushes on the mountain roads, disrupt the operations of the Port of Yalta and also prevent the enemy from destroying the city, the industrial and transport enterprises.⁹

With the going over of the Soviet troops to the offensive, the Crimean partisans and underground by ambushes on the mountain roads disorganized the enemy retreat and by attacks from the rear helped capture towns and cities. The partisan detachments came down from the mountains and, coordinating their actions with the forward detachments of the advancing troops, captured individual areas of the enemy lines of communications and attacked enemy columns and garrisons. In this manner they prevented the organized retreat of the Nazi troops to Simferopol and Sevastopol.

For example, detachments of the Northern Formation operated successfully on the Simferopol--Alushta and Simferopol--Karasubazar (Belogorsk) roads. Thus, on 10 and 13 April, the 1st Partisan Brigade attacked individual enemy subunits retreating along the Alushta Highway. The 18th and 19th Detachments of the brigade fought the Nazis at Mamak, the villages of Neysats (Krasnogorskoye) and Fridental (Kurortnoye) and took part in the liberation of Simferopol. During the night of 12 April, detachments under the command of N. A. Soroka and V. M. Buryak organized ambushes on the Simferopol--Feodosiya Highway near the population point of Zuya. In making surprise raids and conducting ambushes, the partisans destroyed over 1,000 Nazis and captured 254 soldiers and officers.¹⁰

The 5th Partisan Brigade under the command of F. S. Solov'ye caused great damage to the enemy. In the morning of 13 April, the 3d, 6th and 21st Detachments of the brigade broke into Karasubazar and caused panic among the town's garrison. Soon thereafter the town was entered by the forward units of the 227th Rifle Division of Col G. N. Preobrazhenskiy and the 227th Tank Regiment of Col A. S. Soychenkov and these, with partisan support, drove the Nazis out of the town. On the following day, the brigade closed the Karasubazar--Uskut road over which scattered enemy units and subunits were retreating under the pressure of the Soviet troops under conditions of a heavy wooded mountain terrain. The partisans engaged the retreating enemy and checked its retreat. As a result, the 128th Guards Mountain Rifle Division of Maj Gen M. I. Koldubov right behind the enemy broke into Uskut and with the support of the partisans rapidly captured it.¹¹

The 1st Brigade of the Northern Formation and the 4th Brigade (commander Kh. K. Chussi) of the Southern Formation on the morning of 13 April broke into the outskirts of Simferopol and together with the underground led by A. I. Kosukhin and V. I. Babiya, began to protect the industrial enterprises, bridges and public buildings which had been prepared by the Nazis for destruction. In the city the partisan detachments from these brigades met up with formations from the XIX Tank Corps and the 51st Army and aided them in taking the terminal, the railroad station, radio and in liberating the city.¹² Over the 6 days of battle (from 8 through 13 April), the partisans of just the Northern Formation conducted over 50 engagements on enemy lines of communications, they killed 1,576 Nazi soldiers and officers, wounded 415 and took 1,169 prisoner.¹³

Detachments from the Southern Partisan Formation operated on the Alushta--Yalta--Sevastopol and Simferopol--Bakhchisaray--Sevastopol roads. Along with units of the Fourth Ukrainian Front and the OPA, they participated in the liberation of Bakhchisaray and Yalta, they prevented the blowing up of the dam in the Alminskoye Reservoir and the large wine cellars and wineries of Massandry and saved many sanatoriums and resorts on the Southern Crimean Coast from destruction. Just in the battles for Yalta and its suburbs, the 7th Partisan Brigade destroyed 1,016 soldiers and officers, captured 354 Nazis and seized much equipment and weapons.¹⁴ The partisans of the 6th (commander D. A. Vikhman) and 7th Brigades sealed off the South Coast Highway and participated in the liberation of Alushty and the defeat of the enemy grouping to the east of the city.

Detachments from the Eastern Formation monitored the Feodosiya--Karasubazar--Simferopol Highway and also the roads in the eastern part of the mountainous Crimea. The partisans had to fight particularly heavy engagements for the town of Staryy Krym. Detachments of the 3d Brigade and a portion of the detachments from the 2d Brigade on 12 April defeated the city's Nazi garrison. In a 90-minute battle they destroyed around 800 Nazi soldiers and officers as well as much military equipment. However, the retreating enemy units succeeded in retaking the city. Only by the end of 13 April did the arriving units from the mobile group of the OPA with the support of the partisans finally drive the enemy out of Staryy Krym.

Just over the period from 10 through 15 April 1944, the Crimean partisans conducted more than 100 major engagements, they destroyed 4,377 enemy soldiers and officers, captured 3,700 men, destroyed 234 motor vehicles, 7 tanks, 16 guns and captured much equipment, including 172 motor vehicles, 32 guns and mortars, 40 tractor units, a great deal of military equipment and food and most importantly saved from fire and destruction hundreds of enterprises, palaces, resorts, industrial and utility facilities, bridges, houses and service buildings in the Crimean towns and villages.¹⁵

The motherland had high regard for the accomplishments of the people's avengers. For valor and courage shown in the fight against the Nazis, around 4,000 partisans and underground in the Crimea were awarded orders and medals while the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was posthumously awarded to the leader of the Sevastopol underground organization V. D. Revyakin.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ "Krym v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 gg." [The Crimea in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Simferopol, Krymizdat, 1965, p 169.
- ² "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 8, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 158.
- ³ By a decision of Hq SHC of 20 November 1943, on the basis of the troops of the Northern Caucasus Front the Separate Maritime Army was organized (commander, Army Gen I. Ye. Petrov, from 11 February 1944, Army Gen A. I. Yerenko).
- ⁴ "Krym v period Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945" [The Crimea in the Period of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], a collection of documents and materials, Simferopol, Tavriya, 1973, pp 318, 319, 321.
- ⁵ "Krym v period Velikoy...", p 333.
- ⁶ Ibid., p 336.
- ⁷ Crimea Oblast Party Archives (below KOPA), folio 151, inv. 151, file 1, sheets 601-602, 605-606.
- ⁸ KOPA, folio 151, inv. 151, file 1, sheet 125.
- ⁹ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 8, p 105.
- ¹⁰ KOPA, folio 151, inv. 151, file 1, sheet 66.
- ¹¹ A. I. Yerenko, "Gody vozmездiya. 1943-1945" [Years of Retribution. 1943-1945], Moscow, Nauka, 1969, p 197.
- ¹² Ye. N. Shamko, "Dorogami krymskikh partizan" [By the Roads of the Crimean Partisans], Simferopol, Tavriya, 1976, p 21.
- ¹³ "Ocherki istorii Krymskoy oblastnoy partiynoy organizatsii" [Essays from the History of the Crimean Oblast Party Organization], Simferopol, Tavriya, 1981, p 207.
- ¹⁴ "Sovetskiye partizany" [Soviet Partisans], Moscow, Politizdat, 1961, p 586.
- ¹⁵ M. Makedonskiy, "Plamya nad Krymom" [Flames Over the Crimea], Simferopol, Krym, 1969, p 281.

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WORLD WAR II: TANK MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION DESCRIBED

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[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Engr-Col (Ret) V. Syropyatov: "Particular Features of Tank Technical Support for Troops in the Summer Operations of 1944"]

[Text] The operations to defeat the enemy troops in Belorussia, the Western Ukraine and Moldavia in the summer of 1944 involved troops from 7 fronts and these included 37 all-arms armies and 6 tank armies, 13 separate tank and mechanized corps, a large number of separate tank and mechanized brigades, tank and tank-self-propelled regiments. The presence of tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mounts] in the fronts as well as their equipping with repair and salvage facilities by the start of the summer offensive operations are shown in the table.

For carrying out the tasks of tank technical support, the tank troops of the front possessed regular repair subunits in the battalions, regiments and brigades as well as repair and salvage units in the corps, armies and fronts. For supplying the troops and repair units with tank units and spare parts, each front, all the tank armies and a portion of the all-arms armies had armor equipment dumps.

In the troops of the 7 fronts there was a total of more than 9,000 tanks and SAU, and for salvaging and repairing damaged vehicles there were over 200 repair and salvage units including the mobile repair bases (prb), the separate and army repair-rebuilding battalions (orvb and arvb), the salvage companies (er), the damaged vehicle collecting points (SPAM),¹ the mobile tank repair plants (PTRZ) and the mobile tank unit repair plants (PTARZ), that is, around 82 percent of the troop mobile repair and salvage facilities existing on the Soviet-German Front.

One of the characteristic features in tank technical support for the troops during the 1944 summer operations was the centralizing of the repair and salvage facilities in the fronts. As was shown by the experience of the operations in 1943 and the spring of 1944, the TOE repair and salvage units of the all-arms armies for various reasons were not always effectively used for repairing the armored equipment. For this reason by a decision of the military councils of the fronts, by the summer of 1944 these had been taken away from the commanders

of the all-arms armies and turned over to the commanders of the armored and mechanized troops of the fronts. There was also a centralizing of leadership over the repair of armored equipment on the scale of the Soviet Army. In March 1944, the Main Directorate for Tank Repair was established and all repair facilities were turned over to it. This made it possible to more effectively use them in preparing for and in the course of operations and to promptly carry out maneuvers.

Supply of Fronts With Repair and Salvage Units

Operation	Participating fronts	No of tanks, SAU, units	No of repair, salvage units								
			PTBZ	PTARZ	arvb	orvb	rvb	prb	rr. BTM	er detch.	SPAM
Belo-russian	1st Baltic, 1st 2d Belorussian	5200 ¹	—/3	5	8	1	26	—	27/4	24	98 ⁴
Lwow-Sandomierz	1st Ukrainian	2050 ²	2/1	4	3	3	14	1	15/1	11	55 ⁵
Iasi-Kishinev	2d & 3d Ukrainian	1870 ³	1/2	4	4	1	15	—	19/—	15	61 ⁶
Total		9120	3/6	13	15	5	55	1	61/5	50	214

¹ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 9, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, p 47.

² Ibid., p 81.

³ Ibid., p 104.

⁴ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 38, inv. 11371, file 346, sheets 15, 101; inv. 2309, file 128, sheets 4-44; folio 237, inv. 2404, file 5, sheets 2-19.

⁵ Ibid., file 441, sheets 256, 265.

⁶ Ibid., file 285, sheets 14, 30; file 288, sheet 238.

By the summer of 1944, there had come into being a definite system for organizing the troop repair as well as salvage equipment from a repair squad (7-9 men) in a maintenance platoon of a tank battalion up to the mobile tank repair and tank unit repair plants of a front (500 men in each).

On the eve of the operations in the troops great attention was paid to the technical training of the tank crews and specialists from the repair and salvage units. On the First Ukrainian Front, for example, under the 341st arvb in June,

10-day assemblies were held for the repair brigade leaders of all the front's repair units in the aim of studying the repair techniques for the IS tanks and ISU self-propelled mounts which had newly been received in the troops.

The basic work of servicing the tanks and SAU in preparing for the operations were carried out on the level of a technical inspection No 2 (put into effect on 15 March 1944) by the forces of the crews using the repair facilities of the tank battalions, regiments and brigades. This was aimed at ensuring reliable operation of the engines and all other mechanisms of the tanks and SAU for 50-60 operating hours.

The large number of tanks and SAU left on the battlefield in the course of the spring operations was repaired by the troop repair facilities and a portion of the equipment requiring a major overhaul was sent back to the plants of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] and industry. For example, the repair units of the First Ukrainian Front (assistant commander of the BT i MV [Armored and Mechanized Troops] for repair and supply, Maj Gen Engr-Tank Serv V. V. Orlovskiy) in the course of preparing for the operations (from 25 April through 15 July) carried out medium repairs and major overhauls on over 2,300 tanks and SAU, salvaged over 700 and sent over 300 tanks and SAU for repair to the NKO and industrial plants.² On the Second Ukrainian Front (assistant commander of the BT i MV for repair and supply, Maj Gen Engr-Tank Serv Ya. Ye. Binovich) carried out medium repair and major overhaul on over 600 tanks and SAU.³

The Main Directorate for Tank Repair of the Soviet Army provided significant aid to the Ukrainian fronts in accelerating the repair of armored equipment having established repair and salvage centers in the rears of the fronts.

By the start of the summer operations, each of the 6 fronts had a PTARZ and this made it possible everywhere to introduce the unit method of tank repair in all the elements. The production capacity of the First and Third Belorussian Fronts for repairing and salvaging tanks were increased by turning over to them more than 15 repair units from other fronts as well as bringing up repair units from Headquarters reserve together with the tank corps and armies.

As a result of the measures carried out to repair the armored equipment, a majority of the tanks and SAU of the fronts by the beginning of the operations were to have an operating life (until the next overhaul) of 150-200 motor hours.

The salvage units were somewhat reinforced. Thus, the tractors of the salvage companies which had great natural wear were overhauled or replaced by new or captured ones. For the first time the T-34T tractors began to be received by the tank formations. It was impossible to fully equip the salvage units with tractors. The shortage of them on the fronts was around 30 percent and in the tank armies was even somewhat higher, 30-50 percent.

One of the characteristic features in the development of tank technical support for the troops in the 1944 summer campaign, in comparison with previous operations, was the incipient process of narrow specialization among the repair and salvage units. Thus, on all the fronts the individual repair units were specialized in repairing the vehicles of one type out of the existing 12-16 makes of tanks and SAU.

There was also narrower specialization of the salvage companies and SPAM. Thus, on the First Baltic Front (assistant commander of the BT i MV for repair and supply, Col A. P. Tselik), two salvage companies (29th and 64th) were specialized in salvaging the heavily stuck tanks and two SPAM (No 64 and 70) in receiving and dispatching tanks to the rear of the nation. On the First Belorussian Front, a salvage detachment was organized consisting of the 94th Salvage Company and SPAM No 80 for salvaging the heavily stuck tanks. In the course of the operation, the Directorate of the Commander of the BT i MV of the Soviet Army organized several salvage detachments which Hq SHC sent to reinforce the fronts.

The experience of the operations conducted by the Soviet Army in 1943 as well as in the winter and spring of 1944 clearly showed that without an available supply of parts, assemblies and units the repair units often stood idle. For this reason, during the summer operations particular attention was given to establishing a circulating stock of assemblies and parts for repairing tanks both from centralized supply as well as using assemblies and units removed from un-repairable tanks. On the Second Ukrainian Front, for example, each repair unit had its own circulating stock consisting of three-five engines, two-four transmissions, three-five master and six-eight steering clutches and other assemblies. On the First Ukrainian Front, by the start of the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation, the circulating stock of basic units (tank engines and transmissions) was 10-20 percent of the tank fleet.

Depending upon the tasks to be carried out by the troops, the width of the zone of advance, the geographic conditions and other factors the organization of tank technical support of the fronts had its particular features. For example, on the Third Belorussian Front, the repair and salvage facilities were centrally utilized and organized as repair centers and army repair-salvage groups. Due to the fact that the front broke through the enemy defenses on two separate sectors, repair centers were organized on each of these and they were headed by officers from the repair and salvage section of the front's staff. Their task included salvage and the carrying out of medium repairs and major overhauls on the equipment. The repair centers included orvb, prb, a salvage detachment, one or two salvage companies, a SPAM, a disassembly detachment and a mobile armored equipment store. In the 5th and 11th Guard Armies which were fighting as the assault groupings of the front, two army repair-salvage groups (AREG) were organized consisting of one or two prb and a salvage company each. During the first 2 or 3 days of the operation they were to be reinforced by repair facilities from the troop units.

On the Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts, the repair facilities were under the front's command but were assigned to the tank units. The assigned repair units were responsible not only for the repair and salvaging of the equipment but also for the technical state of the tanks in the served tank unit or formation. On the First Belorussian, First Ukrainian and First Baltic Fronts, the repair units for the period of an operation were assigned to the armies and only a portion of them was under the front.

All forms of employing the repair and salvage equipment on the fronts were aimed at increasing the effectiveness of their control and the efficiency of work in returning the battleworthiness of the tank formations and units in the course of the operations.

In the course of the Belorussian Operation, the repair and salvaging of tanks on the Third Belorussian Front (assistant commander of the BT i MV of the front for repair and supply, Engr-Col M. M. Zinov'yev) during the first 2 or 3 days were carried out according to the elaborated plan. But with the committing of the mobile groups to the breakthrough, the pace of the offensive increased sharply (averaging up to 20-25 km a day) and was above the planned. As a result the repair and salvage units of the armies fell 90-120 km behind the troops. For this reason on 2-3 July the repair-salvage units attached to the all-arms armies by an order of the commander of the front's BT i MV were removed from their subordination and reallocated in accord with the actual availability of the repair and salvage facilities according to the sectors of the troop advance.

The front's repair centers began work on repairs in the area of Bogushevsk and Osinovka and set to the subsequent "clearing out" of damaged tanks and SAU from the combat areas. With the reaching of the area of Borisov by the troops, the two operational sectors of the troop offensive merged into one and there was no longer any need for two parallel operating repair centers. At the same time, it was essential to bring the repair centers closer to the troop battle formations and echelon them in depth. For this reason, the repair center which had been deployed on the right wing of the front was moved forward and given the mission of carrying out medium repairs and major overhauls and recovering the vehicles in an area from the forward units to the area of Vilnius while the repair center which was on the left wing became the rear one and was given the mission of repairing the tanks and SAU in the area from Borisov to Vilnius, in subsequently moving into the areas of Krupki, Borisov and Minsk. Thus, a change in the operational situation and the rate of advance of the troops required the making of adjustments in the initial plan for utilizing the repair and salvage units in the course of the operations.

In the 5th Guards Tank Army (deputy army commander for technical affairs, Maj Gen Engr-Tank Serv S. A. Solovoy), the 83d arvb was used by company together with the salvage equipment in the zones of advance of each corps. Assigned to each corps was an officer from the army repair and salvage section and he was responsible for the organization and use of all repair facilities in the zone of the corps and each day reported personally on the course of repairs to the deputy army commander for technical affairs. Due to the difficulties in recovering the tanks in the forested-swampy terrain, several SPAM affiliates were organized on the sectors of corps operations. From 23 June through 20 July, as a daily average, 13 tanks were recovered and more than 35 tanks were returned to combat⁴ and this ensured the maintaining of the constant combat capability of the formations.

On the First Belorussian Front (assistant commander of the BT i MV for repair and supply, Engr-Col A. S. Karpenko), prior to the start of the offensive the SPAM of the tank and mechanized corps had been deployed up to 8 km away, the army ones up to 20 km and the front ones up to 50 km from the forward units. With the committing of the tank formations to the breach, the rate of advance increased sharply. The tank and SAU repair facilities were scattered over large areas. It was rather difficult to assemble the damaged vehicles at the planned SPAM. Because of this they often had to be repaired where they broke down as well as the newly organized SPAM in areas with the highest concentration of repair facilities.

In the 2d Tank Army (deputy army commander for technical affairs, Engr-Col N. P. Yukin), during the first days of a rapid advance the repair facilities were not even deployed. They performed the functions of a technical maintenance unit. The 75th orvb and the 77th Salvage Company of the army advanced behind the III and XVI Tank Corps on the main sector, providing aid to the formations in repairing and recovering tanks on the routes and only with the deployment of the corps did they begin repairing vehicles at the SPAM.

In the Lwow-Sandomeirz Operation, the fronts had two PTRZ. For repairing damaged vehicles each of them was assigned an area in which several armies were operating. Thus, the PTRZ No 4 (chief, Engr-Col L. P. Gankevich) repaired tanks in the zone of advance of three armies (13th, 3d Guards and 1st Guards Tank Armies) and a cavalry-mechanized group under the command of Lt Gen V. K. Baranov (the XXV Tank Corps and the I Guards Cavalry Corps). In this same area were two salvage companies and one SPAM of the front. In the course of the operation, the PTRZ were moved twice and the PTARZ once at the beginning of August. The front's repair units attached to the all-arms armies repaired tanks and SAU when the length of repairs did not exceed 3 days.

Maintenance in the moving up of the 1st and 3d Guards and 4th Tank Armies to the engagement lines and in the course of combat was carried out by regular equipment which constantly moved up behind the troop battle formations. Due to the rapid advance of the tank and mechanized corps in the operational depth and the impossibility of assembling the damaged tanks and SAU in large amounts at the SPAM the armies and corps began organizing SPAM affiliates. They carried out repairs using corps and army repair facilities. And repairs were carried out only on those vehicles the damage to which could be eliminated in not more than 2 days. The unrepairable tanks were turned over to the front's repair facilities at the point of damage and at the SPAM.

In the course of the operations all the repair facilities of the front each day repaired around 180 tanks and SAU.⁵

By the start of the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, all the repair and salvage units on the Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts had been moved to 6-8 km away from the units and formations served by them. The PTRZ No 3 (chief, Engr-Lt Col N. M. Garin) of the Third Ukrainian Front was at Veselyy Kut and the PTARZ No 117 (chief, Engr-Col V. G. Gornostayev) in Odessa.⁶ With the start of combat, the repair units of the fronts constantly traveled behind the tank units and formations assigned to them and this made it possible to minimize the time the tanks and SAUs spent waiting for repairs. By the time the encirclement of the enemy grouping had been completed, the areas of the greatest tank failures had been established. Two affiliates of the PTRZ No 3 were sent there to repair them. The basic repair facilities were in the interfluvium of the Dnepr, Prut and Danube. Here was concentrated a majority of the salvage companies and SPAM of the fronts and only the 130th and 56th Salvage Companies and the SPAM No 56 continued to move behind the advancing units. The entire territory of the interfluvium was divided into four areas and salvage companies and SPAM were assigned to each. These repair and salvage units were responsible for conducting reconnaissance and drawing up a map for the location of the repair pool in the areas. Subsequently, they received a mission for recovering the tanks for every 5 days.

On the Second Ukrainian Front, the repair units by the start of the operation had been moved up behind the assigned formations and field forces: the 146th orvb, the 81st and 154th prb and the 8th Salvage Company into the zone of the 6th Tank Army (deputy army commander for technical affairs, Col G. L. Baishev); the 13th orvb and the 114th Salvage Company behind the XVIII Tank Corps; the 92d orvb and 76th Salvage Company behind the XXIII Tank Corps. In the reserve of the commander of the BT i MV of the front were the 150th orvb and 104th Salvage Company. The PTARZ No 7 (chief, Col-Engr P. P. Ponomarev) was located in Petrushany, the armored equipment dump at Markuleshty and the dump's mobile unit in Faleshty. In the course of the operation, both the TOE and attached repair units continuously moved up behind the troop battle formations, repairing the damaged equipment at the points where it broke down as well as at the army and front SPAM. They also carried out recovery work. As an average each day all the repair units of the front returned up to 145 tanks and SAU to combat.⁷

For improving the operational control of the repair and salvage equipment, the commanders of the repair and salvage units under the front kept charts for the location of the repair brigades and salvage platoons while the armies and corps each day submitted to the front staffs a summary (diagram) of the locations of the repair and recovery units. Such information made it possible to have a notion not only of the condition of the equipment and the location of damaged vehicles but also of the location of the repair and salvage facilities. Because of this it became possible to more effectively take decisions on their utilization.

In the course of combat, in the repair units of the tank armies, the tank and mechanized corps, it became a widespread practice to have operational planning for tank repair vehicle by vehicle for 3-5 days, proceeding from the actually existing repair pool of vehicles. In the aim of monitoring the work of the repair units and increasing the effectiveness of their use in the operations, the corps and armies drew up a repair plan while the repair units had a work schedule plan.

By the summer of 1944, a definite system existed on all the fronts for supplying the troops with armored equipment. In order to bring the supplies closer to the troops, the front dumps as a rule were given one or two head sections the equipment of which was transported by the motor transport of the front's rear or by the motor transport company under the headquarters of the commander of the BT i MV. The head sections sent out mobile equipment stores on motor vehicles and these were brought even closer to the troops. Often they were located at the SPAM of the front or army. An analogous system for the supply of armored equipment existed in the tank armies. In a majority of instances in the course of an operation the dumps of the fronts and tank armies did not move due to the lack of motor transport. But in critical situations acutely scarce spare parts and units were transported by air: for the Second Ukrainian Front, for example, to the area of Petrushany and the Third Belorussian Front (5th Guards Tank Army) to the area of Vilnius. It should be emphasized that such a system for supplying armored equipment in that situation proved effective even under the conditions of the high rate of advance of the troops.

The troops and repair units basically obtained their spare parts from centralized forces. At the same time, a significant amount of scarce parts were manufactured and rebuilt by the repair units while equipment was also repaired at the PTARZ of the fronts. But in this instance the demands of the repair units for spare parts were not fully satisfied. For this reason on all fronts they organized the collecting of spare parts and units from the unrepairable tanks.

For example, on the Third Belorussian Front, they organized irregular detachments for disassembling the tanks and on the Third Ukrainian Front (assistant commander of the BT i MV for repair and supply, Maj Gen Engr-Tank Serv D. N. Ekht), front groups were established for disassembling the tanks drawing on the repair shops and brigades taken from repair units. The groups were equipped with tractors and trailers and motor vehicles. In order to improve the supply of spare parts and units for the repair units of the fronts by removing them from unrepairable tanks, by a decree of the GKO [State Defense Committee] in July 1944, five field assembly-distribution points (PSRP) were organized with 362 men each⁸ and soon thereafter these reinforced certain fronts.

Particularly urgent was the question of repairing the damaged artillery systems of the tanks. On the Third Belorussian Front for the first time under field conditions, they organized the disassembly and repair of artillery systems from burned out and hit tanks and SAU and their reutilization on rebuilt combat vehicles. For this, under the front's mobile dump they established an irregular 105th Artillery Shop for the repair of tank weapons. Due to this it was possible to carry out comprehensive repair on the tanks.

In successfully carrying out the tasks of tank maintenance, a major role was played by the skillfully organized party political work in the repair and salvage units. This was aimed at ensuring the rapid return of the damaged tanks and high quality of the work done.

For improving the quality of repair on the tanks and SAU they made it a practice of turning over the repaired vehicles to the unit in the presence of the brigade leader or brigade which repaired them (the Third Belorussian Front), and the labeling of the tanks and SAU (stenciling the armor) showing what brigade, of what unit, and when the tank was repaired (Third Belorussian and Second Ukrainian Fronts). In this manner the repairmen were responsible to their comrades going into battle for the quality of the repairs done by them.

Sometimes, in order to increase the responsibility of the repairmen, the commanders of the tank units gave written responses on the work quality of the repair brigades (subunits) which had repaired the tanks and SAU (Second Ukrainian Front).

Thus, tank maintenance in the course of the 1944 summer operations continued to be improved. A number of particular features also became apparent in its organization and implementation.

The experience of the summer operations gave instructive examples of the diverse methods for utilizing the repair and salvage units of the armies and fronts. The greatest effect was achieved in utilizing the repair and salvage units as

repair centers, although this required powerful recovery equipment for assembling the repair pool at the locations of the repair centers.

The assigning of repair and salvage units of a front to the tank and mechanized formations and units with their centralized control raised their responsibility for the technical state of the tanks in the formation service. However, with a change in the tasks and the place of the formations in the troop battle formations in the course of combat the effectiveness of their utilization declined sharply.

The experience gained by the engineer and technical personnel both in organizing tank technical support as well as in the tactics of utilizing the repair and salvage units in the course of the 1944 summer operations was widely employed in the subsequent operations of the Great Patriotic War. In many regards, it has maintained its importance also under present-day conditions.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The SPAM of a tank (mechanized) corps (brigade) was a place for assembling out of service (damaged) vehicles in the course of combat. In an army or front this was a TOE troop unit designed to receive and dispatch vehicles for repairs, for disassembling irreparable equipment and supervising its writing off (TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 38, inv. 352785, file 98, sheet 178).

² TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 2704, file 194, sheet 10.

³ Ibid., folio 38, inv. 11371, file 185, sheet 150.

⁴ Ibid., folio 332, inv. 4958, file 4, sheets 53, 59.

⁵ Ibid., folio 236, inv. 2704, file 194, sheet 10.

⁶ Ibid., file 38, inv. 11371, file 255, sheet 30; file 288, sheets 238, 248, 257.

⁷ Ibid., inv. 11371, file 285, sheet 67.

⁸ Ibid., inv. 80050, file 4, sheet 280.

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DEVELOPMENT OF PREWAR AIR DEFENSE VIEWS EXAMINED

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[Article by Col Gen Art Yu. Boshnyak, chief of the Red Banner Military Command Academy for Air Defense imeni Mar SU G. K. Zhukov: "The Development of Air Defense Theory in the Prewar Years"]

[Text] The theory of air defense, as a system of knowledge dealing with the organization, development and combat employment of air defense troops, comprises an inseparable part of Soviet military art. It arose during the years of the Civil War and foreign intervention.

The basic provisions on the organization of air defense for the young Soviet states were put down and developed by V. I. Lenin who repeatedly pointed to the importance of a strong, organized rear and the necessity of its defense.

During the prewar years, the theory of air defense was established. In the works of the prominent military leaders of the Civil War such as M. V. Frunze, A. I. Yegorov, M. N. Tukhachevskiy, S. S. Kamenev and others, on the basis of a critical assessment of the previous combat experience and considering the qualitative and quantitative growth of aviation in the leading capitalist countries, attention was drawn to the need to protect the troops and rear installations against air attacks and the ways for organizing air defense were set down.

During this period special works were published on the questions of air defense for the troops and national installations and these set out the theoretical views on the organizing of a national air defense system and established the principles for the combat employment of various air defense forces and means.¹ On the basis of the theoretical research the practical questions were settled of the organizing of this system and official documents were worked out.

Directly before the Great Patriotic War the theory of air defense underwent further development.

The first months of World War II showed the increasing role of aviation in winning air supremacy and in solving many operational and tactical problems. At the same time, it was apparent that the development of air defense weapons had lagged significantly behind the means of air attack. This was explained

primarily by the fact that the changes in air defense occurred, as a rule, only after the major shifts in the area of aircraft building.

On the eve of the Great Patriotic War the air defense troops were armed with new antiaircraft guns, fighters, radars and other equipment. Certain types of weapons and combat equipment developed at the Soviet plants were the equal of the equipment of the foreign armies and for a number of indicators even surpassed them (see the table).

Table

Tactical and Technical Data of Basic Air Defense Weapons
by Start of Great Patriotic War*

Fighter Aviation			
Basic Indicators	MIG-3	YaK-1	LAGG-3
Maximum speed, km/hour	640	580	549
Service ceiling, m	10,600	10,000	--
Range, km	1,250	850	790
Time for climbing to 5,000 m, minutes	6.5	5.7	--
Weapons	2x7.62 mm 1x12.7 mm	1x20 mm 2x7.62 mm	1x20 mm 1x12.7 mm 2x7.62 mm
Year of commissioning	1940	1941	1941

Antiaircraft Artillery			
Basic Indicators	Antiaircraft Cannons		
	37-mm	76-mm	85-mm
Muzzle velocity of shell, m/sec . .	908	813	800
Ceiling, m	6,500	9,250	10,235
Horizontal range of fire, m	8,500	14,620	15,650
Rate of fire, rounds/minute	160-180	15-20	15-20
Weight of shell, kg	0.732	6.61	9.2
Year of commissioning	1939	1938	1939

* The table was compiled from data in: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 422, 424; "Voyennoye iskusstvo vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne (strategiya i operativnoye iskusstvo)" [Military Art in World War II (Strategy and Operational Art)], Moscow, 1973, p 492; A. S. Yakovlev, "Sovetskiye samolety" [Soviet Aircraft], Moscow, Nauka, 1975, p 79.

Simultaneously with the increased technical equipping, the organizational structure of the air defense troops was improved. Even in 1937, large air defense formations (corps, divisions and even individual air defense brigades) began to

be organized for protecting the most important centers of the Soviet Union against air attack. For strengthening air defenses for the troops, the TOE of the rifle divisions began to include separate antiaircraft rifle battalions. But they, as the experience of the war was to show, were incapable of checking the massed employment of enemy aviation and this was a weak point in the troop air defense system.

Considering the increased combat capabilities of enemy aviation, the Decree of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] of 25 January 1941 set the threatened territory for a possible air attack by the aggressor in the most important strategic sectors to a depth of 1,200 km. By an order of the USSR NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] of 14 February 1941, on this territory air defense zones were established and the boundaries of these coincided with the boundaries of the military districts.³

The main task of the air defense zones was to cover the basic groupings of the Armed Forces, the most important rail junctions and lines of communications and the major industrial and administrative-political centers in the basic operational-strategic sectors. Responsibility for carrying out this mission was entrusted to the military district command.

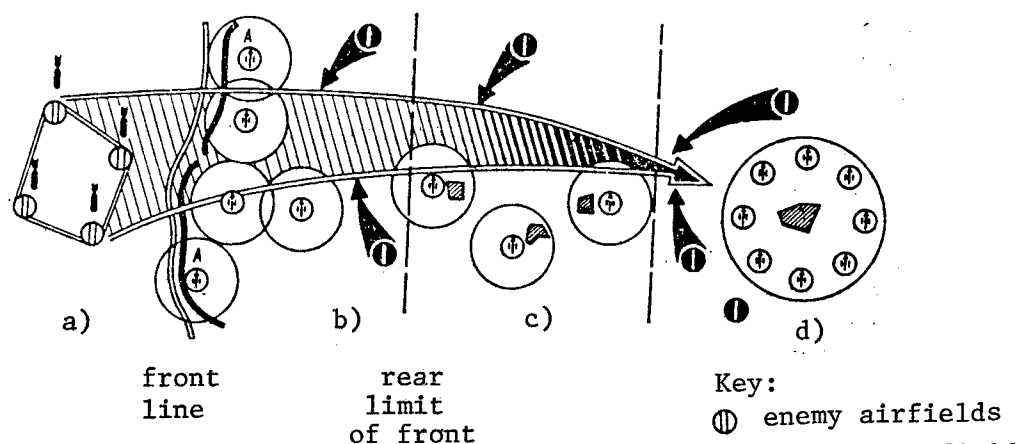
Direct leadership of the antiaircraft artillery units and formations, the air observation, warning and communications service (VNOS), barrage balloons, anti-aircraft searchlights and antiaircraft machine guns assigned for air defense of the points and installations on the territory of a military district was provided by the deputy district commander for air defense and he was also the commander of the air defense zone. The fighter units and formations assigned for air defense purposes⁴ were under the air forces commander of the military districts. The antiaircraft artillery of the all-arms formations was directly under the commanders of these formations.

The Air Defense Directorate which had existed in the USSR NKO was transformed into the Main Air Defense Directorate of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army].

The treacherous attack by Nazi Germany did not make it possible to carry out the planned measures fully. The new air defense organizational structure had not been sufficiently tested out in troop exercises and maneuvers.

Soviet military theory had determined that the main task of air defense should be to ensure the normal carrying out of production and vital functions by the rear installations of the state and freedom of action of the troops under all situational conditions. For effective air defense in wartime the following was envisaged: offensive actions by the air forces in the aim of destroying the basic enemy air forces on its territory (air bases, aviation industry enterprises and raw material forces for this); the destroying of enemy aviation which penetrated our air space; the organizing of local air defense [MPVO] and special preparation of the nation's rear for the purposes of reducing the effectiveness of enemy air raids (Diagram 1).

As a whole, the general air defense system of the Soviet Union was conceived of as an aggregate of coordinated actions by the air forces, the troop antiaircraft artillery and the special air defense formations and units supplemented by local air defense measures.



- a) Bombing of enemy airfields
- b) Operational zone of front's air defense resources
- c) Zone of destroying enemy aviation in interior of nation
- d) Destroying enemy aviation by AD resources of major national center

Diagram 1. Countering Air Enemy According to Prewar Views

During the prewar years, great attention was given to the theoretical elaboration of the questions of air defense for major industrial and administrative-political centers of the nation.

The basic principles of its organization were considered to be: integrated use of all air defense resources with their close cooperation; the establishing of all-round defense with the concentrating of the basic air defense resources in the sectors of the most probable enemy air raids; the strengthening of the immediate defense for major installations inside the point itself; the echelon-ing of the air defense resources in depth.

The fighter aviation, as the most maneuverable means, was assigned a combat zone to a depth of 100-120 km from the boundaries of the defended installation. It was located outside the antiaircraft artillery firing zone. However, in the aim of fully utilizing the combat capabilities of the fighter aviation, it was also granted the rights to operate in the antiaircraft artillery fire zone under the condition of continuing the commenced attacks on the enemy airplanes.

The antiaircraft artillery zone of fire was established at the close approaches to the covered installation. A portion of the small caliber batteries and the antiaircraft machine gun subunits covered small installations within the de-fended points.

Reconnaissance of the air enemy and the notifying of the air defense troops of it were provided by the VNOS system the posts of which were positioned around the covered points. In defending important installations, circular belts were established for a solid field of observation to a depth of up to 120 km from the center of the installation.

Great attention was given to organizing cooperation among all the resources within the created grouping. This was to be organized in such a manner that each air defense weapon was used most effectively and at the essential moment. It was felt that separate zones for the fighter aviation and antiaircraft artillery would ensure freedom of maneuvering for the fighter aviation and the destruction of the enemy aviation on the approaches to the defended installation.

Control and command over the air defense resources at a major installation were provided by the chief of the air defense point on the basis of a previously elaborated plan. In the course of combat there was to be decentralization of command whereby, in accord with the developing situation, the subunit commanders were given great freedom of action.

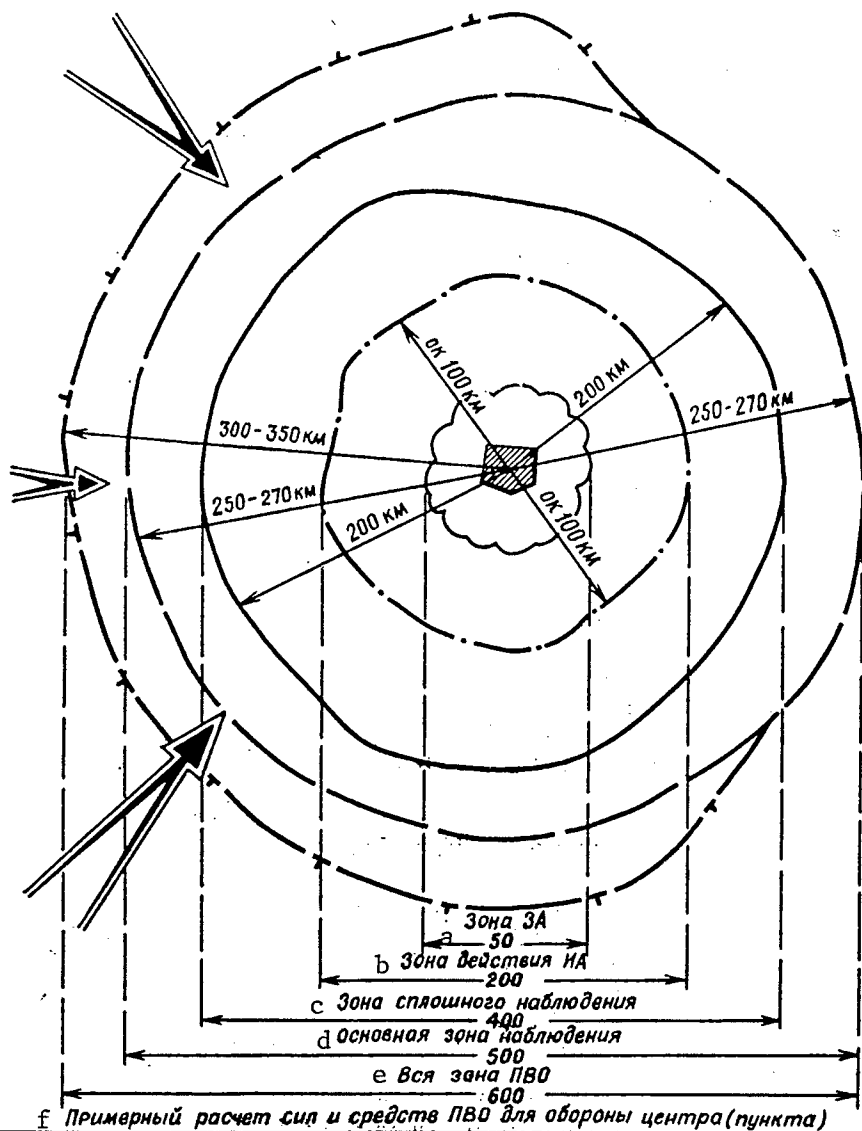
At the same time, in considering the increased combat capabilities of the enemy aviation, Soviet military theoretical thought proposed the thesis of the need for not only installation but also zonal cover. "In a modern defense system one must not limit oneself to just one method.... The major points in the threatened zone will be provided with a spatial cover."⁵

The experience of the commenced World War II showed that the Nazi bomber aviation operated as a mass force, particularly against the most important economic and administrative-political centers. Such air operations of the probable enemy necessitated the massed use of the air defense resources in response. Hence, not without reason it was felt that the air defenses of particularly important state centers should be organized employing large masses of antiaircraft artillery, antiaircraft machine guns, fighter aviation and other air defense means (Diagram 2).

The air defense principles worked out by the start of the war for a major center underwent a severe testing during the years of the Great Patriotic War. The skillful employment of these principles made it possible to prevent the destruction of major national centers and ensure their viability. A classic example of air defense for a major center in accord with the prewar theoretical ideas was the organization of air defense for our motherland's capital, Moscow. A comparative analysis shows that no other major belligerent city had such an air defense system over the entire World War II.

In the prewar period, the theoretical elaboration of the questions of organizing a cover for the railroads held a significant place. The basic goal of air defense on the rail lines was "to ensure continuous operation of the railroads under the condition of air and chemical attack in maintaining the greatest planning and with the least interruptions in train traffic."⁶

The prewar theory envisaged the covering of the most important rail lines, the major rail junctions and bridges by deployed air defense resources. Here the fighter aviation was to be utilized for protecting major road junctions against air strike by patrolling, the medium-caliber antiaircraft artillery would be used to cover the most important rail junctions and stations while the small-caliber antiaircraft artillery and the antiaircraft machine guns would be used for defending small installations (intermediate stations and sidings, bridges, storage areas, depots and so forth).



N п/п	Характер обороняемого г пункта	total number of				
		Истреби- телей h	3А среднего калибра	3А малога калибра	3ен. прожек- торов	Аэроста- тов заг- раждения
1	Важный центр страны (Москва, Ленинград) m	540- 900	600	200- 250	500- 650	216 432
2	Крупный административно- политический центр (Киев, Минск) n	60- 180	60- 120	12	64- 144	81
3	Крупный ж. д. узел или промышленный город o	—	36	12	48	—
4	Небольшой ж. д. узел, завод p	—	8-12	4-8	8-16	—

Diagram 2.

Organization of Air Defense for a National Center (Point)

Key: a--Antiaircraft artillery zone

b--Fighter aviation zone

c--Solid observation zone

d--Basic observation zone

e--Entire air defense zone

f--Approximate air defense resources

for defense of center (point)

g--Nature of defended point

h--Fighters

i--Medium-caliber antiaircraft artillery

j--Small-caliber antiaircraft artillery

k--Antiaircraft searchlight

l--Barrage balloon

m--Important national center (Moscow, Leningrad)

n--Large administrative-political center (Kiev, Minsk)

o--Major rail junction or industrial center

p--Small rail junction, plant

For direct cover of the trains enroute, it was recommended that the antiaircraft machine guns and small-caliber antiaircraft artillery be employed.

The basic theoretical ideas on the organization of the air defense troops underwent substantial changes. The official views were set out in a manual worked out in accord with the provisions of the 1939 Red Army Field Manual. It examined in detail the questions of organizing troop air defenses in positions, on the march, in all types of combat and in moving by rail.

The main task of air defense was considered to be a cover against air reconnaissance and enemy air strikes in the aim of providing one's own troops with freedom of action under all conditions of the combat situation.⁷

The fighter aviation was given the missions of destroying all types of enemy aviation and protecting friendly troops from the air.⁸ The aviation was to cover the troops in the loading areas, on the march and at assembly points, in breaking through the enemy defenses and in actions in the operational depth.

The basic mission for the antiaircraft artillery was considered to be the covering of troop assault groups and artillery by concentrated fire. The small-caliber antiaircraft artillery and antiaircraft machine guns, in being in the battle formations, should ensure combat, massing fire on the most important sectors for repelling the attacks of enemy aviation operating at low altitudes.⁹ In the corps and divisions there were plans to organize antiaircraft artillery groups (ZAG) from the TOE and attached antiaircraft artillery.

Along with working out the general principles for the air defense of the troops and the national rear installations, Soviet military theory carefully elaborated the questions of the combat employment of the air defense branches of troops.

The basic methods of combat for fighter aviation in the air defense system were considered to be: air alert and ground alert. An air alert (patrolling) was seen as the most effective method of operations. For repelling enemy surprise air attacks on the sectors of probable approach it was recommended that "ground ambushes" be maintained. In the course of combat, particular attention was given to the first attack which should be carried out simultaneously by a strike of the entire subunit. It was important to disrupt the enemy air group and destroy the largest number of planes. In the course of repelling massed air raids it was envisaged that entire formations of fighter aviation would be involved in the fighting.

As a whole, fighter tactics in carrying out the air defense missions by the fighter aviation had been rather fully worked out by the start of the war. Inherent to the tactics were high activity, decisiveness of actions and a desire to hit the enemy from short range.

However, at the start of the war it was discovered that not all the questions of the combat employment of fighter aviation had been profoundly worked out. For example, the questions of combating the air enemy at night had been little examined. In practice certain methods of cooperation between the fighter aviation and antiaircraft artillery had not worked out. The problem of guiding the fighters to air targets, particularly under bad flying conditions, had not been fully resolved.

Proceeding from an assessment of the combat capabilities of the probable enemy aviation and its tactics, it was established that the ratio of the antiaircraft artillery calibers in defending the rear installations and troops should be varied depending upon whether these were in the tactical or operational zone of the enemy air force operations. In the first instance the proportional amount of small-caliber antiaircraft artillery was increased and in the second, the medium-caliber.

In working out the principles for the combat employment of antiaircraft artillery, great attention was given to seeking out effective methods for firing at air targets, to determining the most effective configuration of the battle formations of the artillery and to organizing control in preparing for combat and in the course of repelling the enemy air raids.

The antiaircraft searchlights were used for supporting combat operations of the fighter aviation and antiaircraft artillery under nighttime conditions. These were to "pick up" and continuously illuminate the enemy aircraft¹⁰ in the aim of their sure destruction by our fighter aviation or antiaircraft artillery fire. For ensuring the firing of the antiaircraft artillery, provision was made to establish illumination zones and for the fighter aviation illuminated searchlight fields (SPP).

Barrage balloons were viewed as a supplementary means which strengthened air defense. Their effect was seen, on the one hand, in the direct destruction of enemy aircraft in colliding with the cables and on the other, increasing the enemy's altitude in flying over or around the barrage zones. It was recommended that the barrage balloons be employed not only at night but also in the day under cloudy or foggy conditions and with poor visibility.

The units and subunits of the VNOS service were considered to be the basic means for detecting the air enemy and notifying the troops, the air defense posts and the MPVO bodies of this. The observation posts were the basis of the VNOS service. On the territory which was exposed to air attack, these posts were positioned according to a grid system consisting of observation zones running parallel to the state frontier (the front line) and radial observation zones running from the frontier (front line) into the interior of the nation. The distance between the zones was 60-80 km. Thus, a grid with the sides of the squares of 60-80 km was created from the VNOS observation posts. The distance between the posts was 10-12 km.

On the approaches to major centers, the VNOS service was organized according to a system of 3-5 circular zones. The distance between the zones was 20-30 km. In defending certain important national centers (Moscow, Leningrad), the circular zones were located 10-15 km apart, forming a so-called "solid observation field."

Just before the war, radar began to be employed for detecting the air enemy. However, the questions of its combat employment had still not been thoroughly examined.

Thus, Soviet military theoretical thought in the prewar years essentially correctly defined the role of air defense in the overall range of tasks confronting the Soviet Armed Forces.

At the center of attention of Soviet military theory were the questions of the combat readiness of the air defense troops as this was considered one of the crucial factors for successful operations. "The air defense system should always be in combat readiness for repelling the air enemy during the day, at night and under any weather conditions. Continuous, constant combat readiness of the air defense system is a crucial factor as the side which gains time achieves also the greatest results."¹

The theoretical concepts of troop air defense as a whole corresponded to the development level of the probable enemy's aviation. However, it was impossible to fully employ these ideas in practice. The troop antiaircraft artillery just before the war was in the stage of rearming and organizational development and there was a lack of antiaircraft guns, means of control and communications. During the first days of the war, the fighter aviation suffered heavy losses at the front airfields before it could be committed to battle. For this reason, the Ground Forces were poorly covered against air strikes.

Many concepts worked out in the prewar years and dealing with the organization of air defense for the troops and rear installations underwent further development during the war years and have not lost their importance now.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ The most important works of this period are: N. A. Borodachev, "Taktika vozdushnoy oborony" [Air Defense Tactics], Moscow-Leningrad, Voenizdat, 1929; N. A. Yatsuk, "Taktika vozdushnogo flota" [Air Force Tactics], Moscow, Gosvoenizdat, 1924; N. Vinogradov, "Taktika zenitnoy artillerii" [Antiaircraft Artillery Tactics], Moscow, 1928; G. Andreyev, N. Kuchkin, B. Ugarenkov, "Protivovozdushnaya oboronazheleznykh dorog" [Air Defense of Railroads], Moscow, 1981; M. Ye. Medvedev, "Protivovozdushnaya oborona strany" [National Air Defense], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1932; N. S. Vinogradov, "Protivovozdushnaya oborona voysk" [Troop Air Defense], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1932 and others.
- ² [Not in text]
- ³ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 72, inv. 12274, file 16, sheet 13.
- ⁴ From the Air Forces 40 fighter regiments (with approximately 1,500 aircraft) were assigned.
- ⁵ N. S. Vinogradov, "Protivovozdushnaya oborona krupnogo punkta" [Air Defense of a Major Point], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1941, p 82.
- ⁶ G. Andreyev, N. Kuchkin, B. Ugarenkov, op. cit., pp 45-46.
- ⁷ "Polevoy ustav Krasnoy Armii" [Red Army Field Manual], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1940, p 64.
- ⁸ Ibid., p 19.

⁹ Ibid., pp 131, 132.

¹⁰ "Nastavleniye po boyevomu primeneniyu zenitno-prozhektornykh chastey i podrazdeleniy Krasnoy Armii" [Manual on the Combat Employment of Antiaircraft Searchlight Units and Subunits of the Red Army], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1941, p 7.

¹¹ N. S. Vinogradov, "Protivovozdushnaya oborona krupnogo punkta," p 154.

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PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES AGAINST ENEMY TROOPS EXAMINED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 84 (signed to press 17 Apr 84) pp 61-65

[Article by Col V. Tsapkov: "Political Work Among the Enemy Troops in the East Pomeranian Operation"]

[Text] In February-April 1945, the troops of the First and Second Belorussian Fronts conducted one of the offensive operations in the concluding period of the Great Patriotic War, the East Pomeranian. In the course of this the large Nazi troop grouping, Army Group Vistula, was defeated. Political work among the enemy troops played a significant role in successfully carrying out the operation along with the armed, decisive form of combat. The organization of this work was a component part in the activities of the military councils, the commanders and political bodies of the fronts. It was based on Lenin's instructions on the need for an active struggle against imperialism "not only by a national war but also by propaganda and its disintegration from within"¹ and the demands of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the Soviet government, the Supreme High Command and the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army. The Decree of the Council for Military-Political Propaganda of 27 June 1942 states that work among enemy troops must be organized on concrete factual material, it must be differentiated considering the specific features of the opposing enemy units and formations and so forth.

With the entry of Soviet troops on the territory of other states, the situation placed increased demands on this area of ideological work. At a meeting for workers of the propaganda apparatus in May 1944, the Chief of the Main Political Directorate A. S. Shcherbakov emphasized the notion of strengthening political work among the enemy troops and population.² Here it was recommended that basic attention be concentrated on propagandizing the increased might and combat successes of the Soviet Army, its liberation mission and the inevitability of a complete defeat of Nazi Germany, utilizing the increased contradictions within the Army and the instances of the decline in its combat capability. At the same time, the Main Political Directorate pointed out: "Do not frighten the enemy soldiers and officers with an approaching catastrophe but rather help them understand the absurdity of resistance and take up the path of organized surrender and collective giving up as prisoners."³

During the period of preparing for the operation, the political directorates of the fronts--the First Belorussian (chief, Lt Gen S. F. Galadzhhev) and the Second Belorussian (chief, Maj Gen A. D. Okorokov)--along with other measures to support the troop combat, held meetings for the chiefs of the divisional political sections and the deputy regimental commanders for political affairs where they analyzed the experience of political work among enemy troops in the course of the Vistula-Oder and East Prussian Operations. Information was given on the military-political situation and the moral-political state of the Army Group Vistula and measures were discussed to return prisoners of war to the enemy positions. Considering the need to make up for the losses of special propaganda officers, the political directorate of the Second Belorussian Front organized courses for preparing senior instructors for the political sections.

Active work to organize and strengthen this area was undertaken in the army sections. For example, in the 19th Army (chief of the political section, Col V. Ye. Pomortsev), an order was issued which emphasized that responsibility for the organization and effectiveness of political work among the enemy troops rested on the formation commanders and the chiefs of the political sections. A seminar was held for the senior instructors of the divisional political sections and the officers of the army department where a report was given by the army military council member Maj Gen S. I. Pankov. In the course of the exercises they examined the methods for organizing verbal and printed propaganda and they studied the experience of the political bodies which had sent back prisoners of war to the opposing enemy units with propaganda missions.

For improving the practical skills of the propagandists, special tactical exercises were held for them where they worked out the questions of broadcasting and distributing propaganda sheets at enemy occupied strongpoints, filling propaganda shells with leaflets and so forth.

Great attention was given to recruiting and training the propagandist aktiv of the units. In the regiments of the 65th Army (military council member, Maj Gen N. A. Radetskiy), operational groups were organized consisting of a translator, two or three speakers and leaflet distributors. These were given the tasks of organizing broadcasts, distributing leaflets and collecting captured documents. Translators were selected in the battalions. The aktiv of special propagandists in each division numbered 30-40 men.⁴ Meetings were held for the crews of the broadcasting stations and the speakers. In the course of them the personnel improved their knowledge of German, they studied the texts of the broadcasts and read the instructions. In many formations exercises were held for the mortar crews assigned to fire the propaganda shells.

The indoctrinational work with the soldiers, sergeants and officers to be involved in this work consisted in explaining the importance of the tasks of demoralizing the enemy troops and in developing a readiness to risk one's life in acting under enemy fire.

In the political sections of the armies, a supply of leaflets was established numbering up to 60,000 copies and in the divisional political sections from 3,000 to 10,000. Repairs were carried out on the broadcasting stations.

Great work was done to study the enemy and to ascertain its strong and weak points. The obtained data were employed for informing the command, the political workers and the party aktiv on the strength and political-moral state of the opposing units.

The work carried out during the preparatory period by the command and political bodies ensured the readiness of the propagandists to combat the enemy with the weapon of truth and ensured continuity, activeness and a greater ideological impact on the troops in the course of the offensive.

The aims and tasks of political work among the enemy troops in the course of the operation consisted in aiding in every possible way in successfully carrying out the combat missions and by ideological and psychological means to reduce the combat morale of the personnel in the Army Group Vistula.

The political work among the enemy troops was concentrated on propagandizing the following theses: the war of Nazi Germany had been lost; the Soviet Army had broken through the fortifications of the Pomeranian Wall, it had crossed the Oder and was fighting on German territory; the East Pomeranian grouping was doomed to death; nothing could harm Germany more than continuing the absurd resistance because of Hitler. The basic efforts of the propagandists were concentrated on showing the German soldiers a way out of the war and a way to save their lives.

With the start of the operation work among the enemy troops intensified. Oral and printed propaganda were the most widespread forms. The first provided an opportunity of direct contact with the personnel of the enemy subunits. The place and time of operating the broadcast stations were determined by the command of the formations and approved by the commanders of the forward units. The nighttime hours were the most convenient. The length of each broadcasting session was not more than 8-10 minutes from one position and this provided maximum reception of the broadcasts and made it hard for the enemy command to establish the location of the station and knock it out. Prisoners of war were involved in the broadcasting along with the regular workers. Their comments increased the truthfulness and accessibility of our propaganda. For example, in the 65th Army during the period from 4 through 31 March, 12 prisoners of war made 260 broadcasts.⁵

In the course of the street battles, when the distance to the enemy did not exceed 50-100 m, megaphones were used. Being in the battle formations of the assault detachments and groups, the speakers transmitted the most important provisions of ultimatums, slogans and appeals. For example, the station chief Sgt S. Khromov and the speaker MSgt B. Kulik (385th Rifle Division) showed great self-sacrifice. While under any fire, they continuously transmitted: "German soldiers! Your salvation is surrendering. Throw down your arms!" This led to confusion in the ranks of the enemy soldiers.

On the eve of the offensive in the 15th Rifle Division in the area of Starograd, a broadcast was organized on a sector defended by Volkssturmers. Under the influence of our broadcasts several-score newly recruited Nazi soldiers surrendered. Our rifle subunit used the breach formed in the enemy defenses in the course of the attack. The evidence of deserters showed that our broadcasts for them were the impetus after which they finally took the decision to surrender.

Printed propaganda held an important place in the political work among the enemy troops. The leaflets explained the position of the Nazi troops, they pointed out the growing might of the Soviet Army and so forth. Many of them were devoted to official documents of the Soviet government, the Supreme High Command, the commands of the fronts and so forth. For example, the leaflet "German Soldiers in the Pomeranian-Danzig Pocket" pointed to the hopeless position of the surrounded troops and recalled the guarantees of the Soviet Command to everyone who surrendered: the sparing of their lives, proper treatment, sufficient food and return to the motherland after the war.

The leaflet addressed to the soldiers and officers of the Infantry Division Deberitz emphasized its low level of personnel and combat equipment and the great losses which the units had suffered as a result of the absurd counter-attacks.

With the agreement of the prisoners of war the leaflets published their letters and appeals to former fellow servicemen with the urging to halt resistance. Thus, the Political Directorate of the First Belorussian Front during the operation published 19 such leaflets with a total run of more than 1.5 million copies.⁶

Aviation, artillery, mortars, reconnaissance subunits, prisoners of war and the civilian population were used to distribute the leaflets. The reading of the leaflets helped the German soldiers understand the absurdity of continuing to resist.

The commanders, political workers, staffs, party and Komsomol activists carried out great work with the prisoners of war. And this bore fruit. Here are just two of many examples. The battalion commander from the 883d Rifle Regiment, Maj S. Borshch, after proper training sent three prisoners of war to the positions of the 21st Grenadier Regiment and they returned with 65 enemy soldiers and officers. The senior instructor from the political section for special propaganda of the 199th Rifle Division, Capt K. Khanin, organized the return of 33 prisoners of war who persuaded 138 enemy soldiers to surrender.

The number of prisoners of war sent into the enemy rear in the Second Belorussian Front rose by more than 3-fold in March in comparison with February. During the period from 4 through 31 March, 799 prisoners who recognized the absurdity of resistance were released. Some 454 of these returned bringing almost 4,000 soldiers and officers who preferred captivity rather than inevitable death.⁷

By 18 February, the troops of the 2d Assault Army (military council member, Maj Gen N. I. Shabalin) completed the surrounding of the town of Graudenz (Grudiaz). The command of the Second Belorussian Front set the mission for the propagandist personnel to persuade the enemy garrison to surrender using psychological methods. On 21 February, the commandant was sent an ultimatum which put forward the demands "in the interests of preserving the life of the German soldiers and peaceful inhabitants for a future Germany, lay down weapons and surrender." A decision was taken to also send the ultimatum to the commanders of the subunits defending the strongpoints. The content of the ultimatum was broadcast continuously by the broadcasting stations. During the night of

22 February, it was given 34 times. The text of the ultimatum was published in leaflets with a run of 75,000 and these were dropped over the city by aviation. As a result of the successful combat of our troops and the efforts of political agitation among the enemy, the number of deserters increased day by day. At noon on 6 March, a white flag was hoisted over the city. Some 5,500 soldiers and 117 officers surrendered.⁸

The commanders, political workers as well as the activists in the course of the operation showed initiative and resourcefulness. For example, a new feature in the work of the political bodies of the First Belorussian Front was sending back to the garrisons prisoners of war captured on other sectors of the front. Soldiers and officers captured in the area of Frankfurt were sent to Poznan, and those from the Kostrzyn bridgehead to Schneidemuhl. They told their comrades that the Red Army had crossed the Oder and their hopes for outside aid were groundless.⁹ Undoubtedly their talks had a beneficial influence on a definite portion of the enemy soldiers and officers.

In the plans of the political bodies, provision was made to provide help for the representatives of the front organizations of the National Free Germany Committee [NFGC] and who in the course of the operation took an active part in the anti-Nazi propaganda. Working under them were the army "trusties" and their assistants in the divisions. The propaganda activities of the front NFGC organizations consisted in conducting explanatory work in the Wehrmacht units in the aim of unmasking the predatory nature of the war by Nazi Germany and arousing the soldiers and officers to fight for the salvation of the German people.

In endeavoring to arouse national self-awareness in the soldiers and officers in the Army Group Vistula who had been blinded by Nazi propaganda, the anti-Nazis pointed out to their compatriots dressed in army greatcoats the way out of the war, they convincingly showed the inevitability of the defeat of Nazism and its military machine, using specific examples of the status of the prisoners of war they unmasked the Goebbels lie about Russian captivity and pointed out that the defeat of Nazism was not the defeat of the German people.

In order to cause the Nazi officers to halt their resistance, the front representatives in the appeals to them emphasized that as the situation of the surrounded troops was hopeless, surrender was a reasonable act and a norm of military conduct. In a letter to the commandant of Graudenz Fortress, the front representative of the NFGC, B. Bechler, wrote: "The person who now puts obedience to Hitler higher than responsibility for the life and future of our people is an accessory to crime and is acting dishonestly. The person who carries out the orders of such a criminal as Himmler himself becomes a criminal. Act courageously, decisively and independently, for Germany should live."¹⁰

In assessing the contribution of the NFGC representatives to the struggle against Nazism and war, the chief of the Political Directorate of the Second Belorussian Front, A. D. Okorokov, years later, emphasized: "The German anti-Nazis...provided us with invaluable aid in conducting political work among the Nazi soldiers."¹¹

Political work among the enemy soldiers was active and aggressive and it contributed to the overall success of our troops. Due to its beneficial effects,

thousands of lives of soldiers and officers, enterprises, residences and cultural monuments were saved. The commanders and political workers gained experience in ideological influence on the enemy before and during an operation.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 37, p 212.
- ² TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 32, inv. 11306, file 547, sheet 180.
- ³ Ibid., file 591, sheet 374.
- ⁴ Ibid., folio 237, inv. 2414, file 111, sheet 460.
- ⁵ Ibid., sheet 495.
- ⁶ V. Wolf, "Na storone Krasnoy Armii" [On the Side of the Red Army], translated from the German, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 208.
- ⁷ See: M. I. Burtsev, "Prozreniye" [Return of Vision], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, p 290.
- ⁸ TsAMO, folio 32, inv. 11306, file 547, sheets 117-120.
- ⁹ Ibid., folio 233, inv. 2374, file 152-a, sheet 504.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11306, file 608, sheet 174.
- ¹¹ A. D. Okorokov, "Slovo, vedushcheye v boy" [Words Leading into Battle], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1980, p 183.

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AIR TACTICS AGAINST AIR DEFENSES IN LOCAL WARS ANALYZED

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[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Maj Gen Avn M. Fesenko: "Fire Damage to Ground Air Defense Weapons"]

[Text] Fire damage to air defense weapons, along with destroying enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground has been widely employed and improved in local wars.

In the Korean War (1950-1953), American aviation armed with modern equipment and weapons was actively resisted by the air defenses of the Korean People's Army and this was based on jet fighters and antiaircraft artillery. As before, fire damage to the antiaircraft artillery was carried out in the course of attacking the important defended installations. The air defense neutralization group operated somewhat ahead of the attack one and had a range of weapons specially designed to carry out the set mission. Small-caliber fragmentation bombs were dropped on the antiaircraft artillery positions using "area bombing."

Active operations "with fire on fire" involved the real threat of hitting the aircraft, since the range of employing the aviation weapons ensuring the necessary hit accuracy was too short. The pilots still did not have an opportunity to open fire but the aircraft was already within the range of the antiaircraft artillery. This factor determined the forced choice of effective defense methods. The American fighter bombers involved in direct support for the infantry troops most often directly encountered the antiaircraft fire.

As was shown by the final data on combat in Korea published in the foreign press, the combat between the jet aircraft--the major technical achievement of those times--and the antiaircraft artillery--an "obsolete" means of hitting air targets--was rather unexpected. Out of the total number of the U.S. Air Force losses (1,000 aircraft not counting those damaged and not considered as combat losses), 675 were downed with antiaircraft artillery fire (67.5 percent).¹ The distribution of the combat losses by branches of aviation, as the specialists felt, to a significant degree corresponded to the experience of World War II. The minimum losses were suffered by the B-29 bombers and the highest losses by the fighter bombers. The high percentage of losses for them (one-half out of the total number of losses) are explained by the fact that "the fighter bombers

to a significantly greater degree than other aircraft were exposed to the fire of all the enemy ground air defense weapons."2

At the beginning of the air war in Vietnam (1965-1973), the American aviation was countered by subsonic MIG-17 fighters and antiaircraft artillery. However, 3 months after the first raid on North Vietnam, in July 1965, the North Vietnamese air defenses were significantly strengthened with the appearance of antiaircraft missile complexes which were delivered to cover Hanoi and Haiphong. Under these conditions, the old methods of countering the ground air defenses were no longer suitable. Many procedures employed to reduce the effectiveness of antiaircraft artillery fire became useless in zones covered by the antiaircraft guided missiles (SAM). Flying at a great altitude also did not eliminate the threat of hitting the aircraft. This necessitated the seeking out of new methods for neutralizing the ground air defense weapons. But the experiments often ended unsuccessfully. The attempts made to neutralize the qualitatively different air defenses by massed bombing was unsuccessful. The first attacks by American fighter bombers in the summer of 1965 were carried out according to the adopted standard. The idea was based upon intimidation by numbers and a continuous fire effect from several directions.

In order to reduce airplane losses in the raids over North Vietnamese installations and to open the way to the objectives of attack, a significant portion of the forces was assigned to air defense neutralization groups and these included specially trained crews for hitting standard targets for this mission. These were employed basically in two variations of actions. The first included simultaneous attacks by fighter bombers on several targets in one limited area. Most often such attacks were made in the general plan of a so-called straight breakthrough of the air defense circular system, when counteraction from the ground was rather effective. An avoidance maneuver by the attack group under these conditions was excluded while the protective means for an individually taken aircraft did not ensure dependable radar screening. A straight breakthrough to the objectives of the attack across the antiaircraft missile zone was also employed by the strategic B-52 bombers which did not possess sufficient maneuverability for avoidance and avoided entering the antiaircraft artillery zone at a low altitude. Here the basic principles for fire damage to the ground air defense means were considered to be maximum density of the attack and a continuous increase in effort in a short period of time.

The foreign specialists have viewed this variation of fire effect as the more difficult to carry out, since the air defense neutralization groups which laid a narrow corridor by fire for the overflight of the attack planes to the target accumulated in a limited area and impeded each other's maneuvering. Bombing of the air defense firing positions was carried out in a tight flight formation upon the command of the leader. Due to the fact that it was rather difficult to coordinate the actions of the different tactical groups, they began to be put into a common battle formation covered by fighters and only at the designated line did the group move into an extended formation with minimum time intervals.

In the second variation there were echeloned (successive) actions by the fighter bombers in several areas over an extended time. The aircraft groups consisting of not more than eight carried out independent assignments to destroy the air

defense installations which had been detected from the air. Often a reconnaissance plane joined the battle formation of the fighter bombers. Using electronic equipment, its crew was able to determine the direction to the operating radar and give target designations to the attack group. The crews of the latter often employed large-caliber unguided missiles (of the "Zuni" class) which were new for those times. In the course of the echeloned operations, the composition of the air defense groups was reduced by several-fold. The pilots were given freedom in using the weapons with a radio command guidance system (the Bullpup type).

In the last period of the war, the fighter bomber flights, in relieving one another in the air, operated against air defense installations in the intervals between the intense raids by American strategic, carrier and tactical aviation against Hanoi and Haiphong. Continuous isolated operations had more as their goal the maintaining of around-the-clock tension in the air and putting psychological and physical stress on the personnel of the air defense subunits and units.

One of the new tactical procedures employed by the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam was the so-called "surprise appearance" method. This provided an opportunity for each crew involved in a fire attack on the air defense weapons to employ its weapons, that is, to attack the target. In these instances no cover group was assigned. A squadron (8-12 F-105 or Phantom aircraft) split off into pairs in the assembly area. The pairs of aircraft formed up behind one another at the established time (up to 2 minutes) interval. The flight at the last stage of the route was made at a maximum low altitude. After visual detection of the target, speed was increased and the plane made an abrupt climb like a half-loop with a half-turn and then executed an "over the shoulder" turn and went into a dive at an angle of up to 45°. The bombs were released in a salvo, after which the plane continued its descent and went into level flight directly near the ground. The procedure was based on the assumption that the entire trajectory of the attack should occur outside the space which could be fired on from the ground.

Seemingly, the "surprise appearance" method would provide sufficiently high effectiveness of the fire damage. The results of the attack depended solely upon the ability of the pilot to carry out the complex flight mission. However, the positions of the antiaircraft missiles began to be covered by conventional anti-aircraft artillery. The aircraft during the climb, the dive and particularly during the moment of the over-the-shoulder turn sharply reduced its speed of movement relative to the ground point and became vulnerable.⁴

The method of attack after executing a hump (Fig. 1) differed from the "surprise appearance" method that the aircraft did not come out directly over the target at a low altitude but rather climbed from a checkpoint. Since the lead time for releasing the bomb was put into the aircraft computer ahead of time and the remaining data were recalculated according to the current values of the altitude, speed and range to the target, the bombing was done automatically.

The new procedures for fire damage to air defenses as employed by American aviation in Vietnam had certain common traits. The scheme of actions of a fighter bomber in the target area was as follows: closing at a maximum low altitude--

the ascent maneuver--transition into a dive--attack in a minimum time interval. Experimental flights at specially equipped ranges showed that in descending to a low altitude the aircraft left the radar detection zones of the missile installations. Tracking it was either extremely difficult or completely excluded. In the process of the ascending combat maneuver the aircraft was picked up by the radar, however for such a short time that it was impossible for the combat crew of the antiaircraft installation to produce "steady" aiming data.

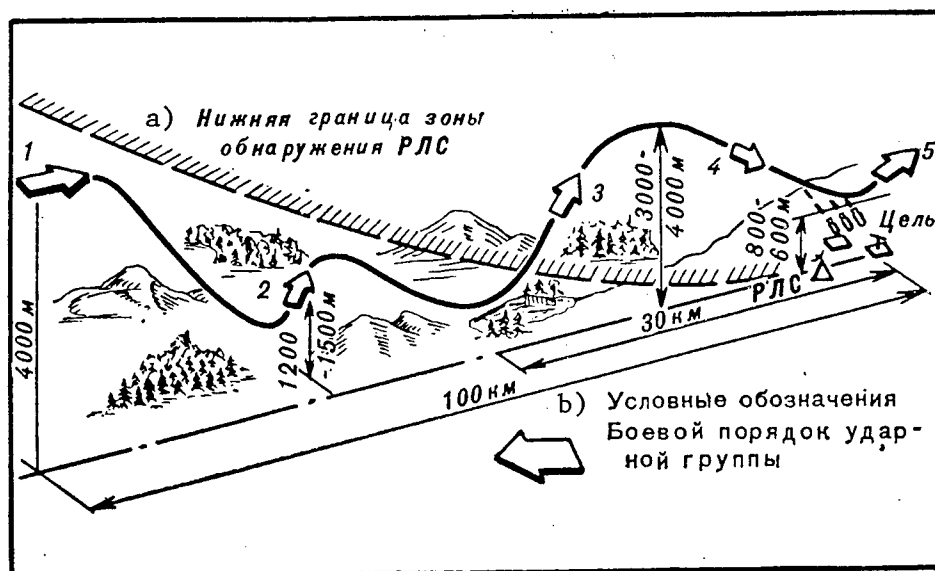


Fig. 1. Attack on a SAM Position After a Hump

1--Descent below the radar "lobe"; 2--Clarification of aircraft position; 3--Hump over control checkpoint; 4--Dive attack; 5--Pulling out of attack with anti-aircraft fire maneuver; a--Lower limit of radar detection zone; b--Combat formation of attack group.

An attack with a dive ensured the highest accuracy of the strike. The pilot was aided in orienting himself in the difficult situation and in choosing the most effective procedure for the attack by the instruments signaling when the aircraft entered the zone of the ground detection and guidance radars. This equipment was installed on all American fighter bombers in the course of the Vietnamese War. Warning and target designation, in addition, came from the radar reconnaissance aircraft on alert close to the combat area.

Equipment was improved, new tactics were worked out but the losses of American aircraft from the fire of ground air defense weapons did not decline. One of the reasons for this was the greater combat skill of the defenders of the Vietnamese skies and their skillful employment of the modern weapons systems. Another reason was that the antiaircraft guided missiles of the Vietnamese air defenses forced the American aircraft to descend to an altitude where the danger of being hit by the 37-mm and 57-mm weapons increased sharply. The number of antiaircraft batteries in the air defense system increased noticeably and the North Vietnamese became more experienced. They quickly changed the positions of

the anti-aircraft missiles at night, leaving dummy targets or mock-ups in their place. The abandoned position was strongly guarded by camouflaged anti-aircraft artillery. The flight tactics to the objective reconnoitered the day before were organized considering the countering of the anti-aircraft guided missiles but were ineffective against anti-aircraft artillery. Moreover, the anti-aircraft cannons changed positions more frequently and more rapidly. An aircraft which was caught in the zone of their fire had little chance of escaping. In order not to give away their position, the combat crews did not employ tracer shells.⁵

Maneuvering in altitude also began to reappear in the tactics of fire damage. Here the "Korean version" was adopted of having the attacking aircraft go beyond the range of the small-caliber anti-aircraft artillery fire. The counteraction of the SAM was reduced by the intense setting of jamming for the radars the data of which was used in launching the missiles. As for the employment of unguided weapons (free-falling bombs) from a great height, these had a low strike accuracy. Under the conditions of the counteraction of combined air defense it was no longer possible to compensate for this shortcoming by increasing the number of aircraft in the battle formation (that is, actually by the number of bombs released). New weapons began to be employed against the anti-aircraft artillery such as cluster ("pineapple") bombs which after the opening of the containers in the air covered large areas and were designed to hit the personnel. The new tactics presupposed the neutralizing of the ground air defense weapons both by firing and by jamming.

In 1966, the American Air Force in Vietnam received a guided weapon specially designed for hitting the guided missile radars of the Shrike type. The missile had a homing head for a radar operating in a pulse mode. For effectively employing the missile against a radar which was part of an installation's air defense system, it was necessary, in the first place, to activate it and, secondly, to impede the detection and identification of the carrier aircraft which was in a vulnerable position on the launch line. Proceeding from these requirements, feint maneuvers were frequently undertaken with the simulating of the breakthrough of aircraft to the covered installation thus forcing the air defense weapons to prepare to repel the raid. Also released were false radar targets or "traps" which simulated the flights of aircraft and the direction of the attack. A complicated radar situation was established against the background of which it was hard to isolate the actual target (the aircraft carrying the Shrike missiles) according to the plan.

At the end of the war in Vietnam, American aviation was already employing an entire complex of measures for fire damage to air defense weapons: concentrated group and wave operations with the intense setting of jamming, attacks from low and high altitudes employing conventional and guided weapons. The method of making the attack was chosen depending upon the situation and the nature of the set combat mission. But the elaborated methods of attack were parried by equally effective procedures of defense. The anti-aircraft artillery possessed a number of advantages which had not changed with time. The main ones were simplicity and reliability, mobility, the possibility of massed employment, the concealment of committing to battle (due to natural camouflaging) and "insensitivity" to jamming (electronic suppression). The positions of the anti-aircraft artillery were hard to spot and equally hard to attack from the air. But the

main thing was that the second generation combat jets employed by the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam could not operate outside the altitude-limited range of the small-caliber antiaircraft artillery (37-mm and 57-mm guns).

In the local wars in the Near East (the "6-Day" War of 1967, the "Positional" War of 1969-1970, the October War of 1973 and the war in Lebanon in June 1982), the attack forces of Israeli aviation were represented by jet fighter bombers of the first and second generations. The air defenses of the Arab countries by the October War of 1973 had been reinforced by a new type of antiaircraft systems and this necessitated the elaboration of more complicated methods for hitting the air defense weapons.⁶

An attack from a circle was employed by fighter bombers in areas with a local air defense where the cover zone of one objective did not overlap another. In using the air reconnaissance data and being guided by the readings of the in-flight warning instruments, a group of 4-8 aircraft entered a holding area and then broke off one by one. In keeping approximately the same distances, the pilots formed a large-radius closed circle with the target in the center. If a missile was launched toward one of the aircraft, the pilot maneuvered while the target was attacked from the opposite side. In order to be able first to detect the launching of the missile from the ground and determine the aiming point, the circular flight was made at an altitude of approximately 3,000-4,000 m.

An attack with a combat turn commenced immediately after the flight flew over the beam of the detected target and each subsequent aircraft before going into the dive turned at a greater angle than the previous one. The side distance for the point of starting the maneuver from the target usually was commensurable with two turn radii. Often a false crossing of the beam was employed in order to dull the vigilance of the air defense crews and then suddenly make an attack from the opposite direction. In this instance the point for commencing the maneuver was shifted beyond the target and each wingman began the turn after the calculated time along a straight line. The length of the turn for each aircraft before it went into a dive also varied and as a result of this there was a sequential attack in a fan from a sector of 180-270° in relation to the course of approaching the target. Here there was a greater probability that the pilot would lose visual contact with the target. With a false overflight small-sized objects were not chosen for the attack.

In the 1973 October War, Israeli aviation employed the Shrike antiradar missiles (ARM) (Fig. 2). Considering the high hit accuracy (when defensive measures were not sufficiently effective), the ARM were often used solely as a means of target designation. In this instance they were mounted on one aircraft in a flight while the remaining crews employed conventional bombs, in aiming from the detonation point of the Shrike ARM. The direct threat of an effective counteraction forced the signing of support aircraft which by false maneuvers on the boundary of the launch zone tried to divert the attention of the combat crew of the anti-aircraft missile complex and ensure the covert approach of the bombers to the target. Most often the diversionary group made intentional incursions into the radar scanned area from the same direction as the attack group. The aircraft carrying the ARM approached the target at a low altitude, beneath the radar "lobe." Then it executed a steep ascending maneuver and the ARM was launched beyond the lock-on zone. The modifications of the Shrike ARM, the standard ARM,

were equipped with homing heads ensuring the flight of the missile to the target even in the instance that the detected radar suddenly stopped working. The war head of the ARM (weighing around 70 kg) was detonated 4-5 m above the earth's surface and the fragments covered the entire area on which the radar and auxiliary units were located.⁷

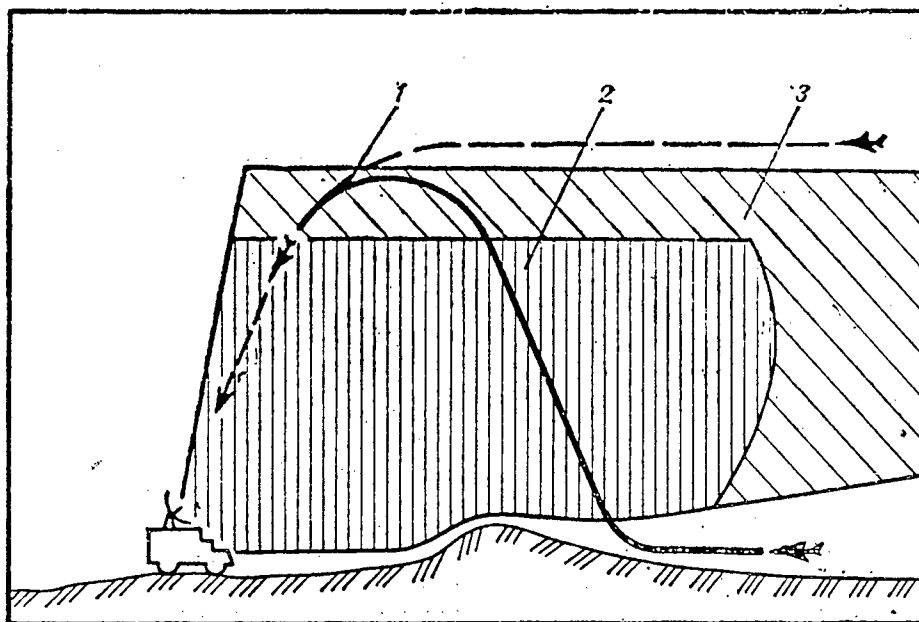


Fig. 2. Variation of Attack on Radar
(Low-Altitude Antiaircraft Missile Complex)
Using Antiradar Missiles (ARM)

1--Trajectory of aircraft's flight; 2--Radar lock-on zone; 3--Radar detection zone.

On the tactical level, most advantageous during the attack on a target was a quick maneuver ensuring a minimum stay in the firing zone of the installation's air defense weapons. The best speed in approaching the target and in the course of the attack employing an optical sight corresponded to $M = 0.8$. This same speed ensured a rapid angular displacement relative to the antiaircraft unit (a turn in a minimum time) and a maximum number of weapons fired at the target.

The Israeli Air Force, having encountered strong resistance from the antiaircraft missile complexes and having lost 30 Phantom and Skyhawk aircraft on the first day of the war, switched over to direct attacks on the SAM positions and their radars. Here they used unguided missiles, bombs and cannon fire. Having detected the launch of a SAM or having spotted the missile in flight, the pilots executed a standard maneuver with the going over to the attack in the form of a high-G roll and coming out at a low altitude. However, as a result of this maneuver the aircraft were often in the zone of the small-caliber antiaircraft artillery and suffered losses.⁸

Since the air defenses of the Arab countries were armed with the SA-6 and SA-7 (the code name adopted in the NATO countries) low-altitude missile complexes with optical and radar control systems, they were responsible for a significant portion of the 115 Israeli aircraft shot down in the October War.⁹

In the last armed conflict in the Near East, in Lebanon (1982), there was an increased number of Israeli aircraft attacks against the air defense weapons employing guided weapons. Added to the advanced missiles were controllable guide bombs (UAB), and American-produced missiles with television and laser guidance. The attacks were preceded by false incursions by Israeli drones into the zone covered by the SAM in the aim of forcing the ground radars to be turned on. After "blinding" the air defenses, the attack against the positions of the missile complexes was made by groups of Phantom and Kfir fighter bombers which covered aerial installations with conventional weapons.¹⁰

The "proportional amount" of the basic air defense weapons systems in combating the air enemy in the Near East has somewhat altered. According to the data of the foreign press, Israeli aviation lost 10-15 percent of the aircraft in air battles while the remaining losses were due to the SAM and antiaircraft artillery which was strengthened with advanced extra long-range barrels. The choice of the weapons systems and the methods of employing them were largely determined by the mountain terrain (the Golan Heights and the Lebanese mountain ranges) and this was used by the aviation for radar screening of the aircraft flights and for achieving surprise by the attack aircraft.

Thus, the hitting of air defense weapons in the local wars in the Near East has been characterized by the following basic features: by the combined employment of guided and conventional weapons in operations against a single target (air defense installation which includes radars and antiaircraft guns), by a definite sequence of actions based upon the principle of "blind--suppress"; maximum use of the terrain for screening the flight of the attack groups and achieving surprise of the first attack (it is noteworthy that when surprise was counted on, jamming was ordinarily not employed so as not to give any "warning" to the opposing air defense).

In the Anglo-Argentine armed conflict of 1982 on the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands, the attacks by the English aircraft against the low-altitude missile complexes of the Roland type with which the Argentine air defenses were armed were made in the process of attacking other installations (for example, airfields in the aim of winning air supremacy). According to the data of the foreign press, the Royal Air Force succeeded in neutralizing by jamming the counteraction of these complexes having acquisition and fire control radars. The Roland antiaircraft missile complexes as a result downed only one vertical take-off and landing aircraft of the Harrier type while the other four (of the five English planes downed by ground air defense weapons) were hit with the portable Blowpipe type missile weapon and by antiaircraft artillery.

Presently the foreign press is giving particular attention to the making of attacks by aircraft beyond the effective range of the ground air defense weapons. Here they have widely publicized examples when during the Anglo-Argentine conflict the crews of the English Harrier aircraft from a pitch-up released the guided Pave Way bombs with a laser guidance system a distance of 6-7 km from the target.¹¹

As a whole the hitting of anti-aircraft missile installations and low-altitude anti-aircraft missiles for the foreign specialists seemed as complicated a question as the active combating of anti-aircraft artillery. In local wars this problem has not been finally resolved.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, No 6, p 1063.
- ² [D. Stewart], "Vozdushnaya moshch'--reshayushchaya sila v Koreye" [Air Power--The Crucial Force in Korea], Moscow, Inostrannaya literatura, 1959, p 280.
- ³ NEW YORK TIMES, No 23, 1973, p 1.
- ⁴ AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY, 24 January 1966, p 26.
- ⁵ AIR FORCE, No 4, 1966, p 43.
- ⁶ NEW YORK TIMES, 19 October 1973, p 2.
- ⁷ SOLDAT UND TECHNIK, No 10, 1974, p 532.
- ⁸ AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY, 16 January 1973, p 12.
- ⁹ NEW YORK TIMES, 19 October 1973, p 16.
- ¹⁰ FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL, 16 October 1982, p 1008.
- ¹¹ INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, No 11, 1982, p 1495.

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WORLD WAR II: IMPORTANCE OF SECOND FRONT DISPUTED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 84 (signed to press 17 Apr 84) pp 74-82

[Article by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Honored Scientist of the RSFSR, Prof V. Sekistov: "Truth and Fabrication on the Opening of the Second Front in Europe"]

[Text] One of the realities of the 1980's is the struggle for the hearts and minds of billions of people in the world.¹ In this struggle "the imperialist politicians," emphasized the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Comrade K. U. Chernenko, "in every possible way are endeavoring to restrict the international influence of the socialist countries. They are endeavoring to weaken their solidarity and shatter the underpinnings of the socialist system where it seems to them they can count on success."²

Recently bourgeois propaganda has given great attention to the questions of the second front in Europe. Here many Western historians, chiefly American ones, have continued to poison the minds of people with the lie about the decisive role of the United States in defeating Nazi Germany. All of this is being done to increase the prestige of the Americans as "dependable allies" in the eyes of the Western European public.

World War II lasted 6 years. Over this time the armed struggle was carried out on different theaters of war. From June 1941, the main front of the war in Europe was the Soviet-German Front. And this it remained over the entire war right up until 9 May 1945, Victory Day. For almost 4 years, fierce battles were fought on the Soviet-German Front and in the course of these the Soviet Army defeated the basic forces of the Nazi aggressor, it defended the honor and liberty of the Soviet state and saved the peoples of the world from the threat of Nazi enslavement.

There was also a second front opened in June 1944 by the landing of the Allied troops in Northwest France. By its very role, it was actually a second front for it was opened only 3 years after the attack by Nazi Germany on the USSR, and after the Soviet Armed Forces had halted the aggressor's invasion, carried out a fundamental turn in World War II and created conditions for the final defeat of the enemy.

Prior to June 1944, authoritative politicians and military personnel in the United States and Great Britain unconditionally recognized the crucial significance of the Soviet-German Front in the struggle against the Nazi aggressor. Thus, President F. Roosevelt in one of the secret messages to the English Prime Minister W. Churchill, in November 1942, wrote: "The Russian Front is our greatest bulwark."³ And here is the evidence of Gen D. MacArthur: "I agree with the president on the primary significance of the Russian Front."⁴ The American historian, Prof R. Weigley, emphasized that "the landing of the Anglo-American troops in Northern France was possible exclusively due to the sacrifices and hard fight of the Russians."⁵

These views, as is known, were fundamentally revised during the period of the Cold War and in following years, when the ideologists of imperialism established myth of the crucial importance of the second front in the final defeat of the Nazi aggressor. Numerous books are being published now in the West on the problems of the second front.⁶ The U.S., English and French periodicals systematically publish articles timed to the 40th anniversary of the landing of the Allied Troops in North Africa, Italy and France. These publications, as a rule, are all the same in their political purpose as they have matured in the same social milieu and have appeared in an atmosphere of a heightening of international tension by the U.S. and NATO aggressive forces. The imperialist circles which have set the goal of creating an universal global anti-Soviet ideological front are endeavoring to depict the United States as the sole "saviour of civilization" against a nuclear threat and NATO as a "peaceable" organization. Hence the attempt to show America as the "creator of victory" in World War II and to give the second front the importance of the "crucial factor" in defeating the Wehrmacht.

The approaching 40th anniversary of the landing of the U.S., English and Canadian troops in Normandy is being greeted by the Reagan Administration with a noisy propaganda campaign. The American propaganda services are endeavoring to dull the concern of the Western Europeans to whom the Pentagon's strategic plans have assigned the fate of being the first to be incinerated in a "limited" nuclear war in Europe.

In a situation of the initiated psychological warfare by the U.S. militant forces against the socialist countries, it is extremely important objectively and from scientific positions to examine the most acute political problems in the history of the second front. These are: the very concept of a second front, the dates for opening it up, its role in the defeat of Nazi Germany in the concluding stage of the war and in liberating the peoples of Europe from the Nazi occupiers.

First of all, in the most recent works by bourgeois authors, one can clearly see an attempt to distort the essence of the second front and to give this concept a broad interpretation, including in it not only combat operations in France but also in North Africa (Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia), Northwest Africa (Morocco) and Italy. For example, A. Seaton in his book "The Fall of Fortress Europe" endeavors to persuade the reader that the landing of the U.S. Expeditionary Forces in November 1942 in North and Northwest Africa was of the importance of "opening up a second front" against the axis powers. The American historian J. Taylor in an article "The Campaign in North Africa" published

in the October 1983 issue of the journal MILITARY REVIEW, has called this landing "an historic turning point in the war."⁸ D. Middleton has given the actions of the Anglo-American troops in North Africa the importance of a "turning point" in World War II.⁹

It is not a question that the operations of the Allied Troops in North Africa could not be and were not a real second front. Bourgeois authors cannot help but know that even at the very outset of the Great Patriotic War (July 1941) the Soviet government stated that a second front must be established in Northern France, that is, in an area not far from German territory and on the shortest route to its vital centers. On 3 September of the same year, the Soviet government reaffirmed that the second front should be opened in France in order to force Hitler to remove 30-40 Wehrmacht divisions from the Eastern Front. The approach to the understanding of a second front at that time was also clear among the U.S. leaders. For example, the Secretary of War, H. Stimson, felt that a second front from the viewpoint of geography is "the shortest road to the heart of the main enemy, the crossing of the English Channel with the support of British-based aviation."¹⁰ Precisely this strategic axis was what President F. Roosevelt had in mind in issuing in March 1942 a directive to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on working out a plan for the invasion of France "across the English Channel at its narrowest point, between Calais and Le Havre, to the east of the River Seine."¹¹ The English Prime Minister W. Churchill also understood the same thing as a second front.

The military operations of the Allied Troops in North Africa and then in Italy were of secondary, local significance. This can be seen first of all from the data on the distribution of the ground forces of Nazi Germany and its European Allies during that period. Thus, an absolute majority of the most battleworthy divisions of the Wehrmacht and satellites remained constantly on the Soviet-German Front: 266 divisions in November 1942, 233 in April 1943 and 245 in January 1944. At the same time, 12.5, 14.5 and 21 divisions, respectively, were fighting on the other fronts.¹²

It must be emphasized that the leaders of Nazi Germany did not consider North Africa a second front. They undoubtedly anticipated the danger of a fight on two fronts. They saw the main danger in the West coming from the landing of the U.S. and English troops in France. The fear of the possibility of the establishing of a second front precisely in Western Europe impelled Hitler to try to find a common tongue with the anti-Soviet forces in the United States and England on a general class basis of anti-Sovietism and anticommunism. Thus, even at the end of 1942, Hitler undertook an attempt to reach a truce with the United States and England. Later there were contacts between the German diplomat Fied and representatives of the Western powers in Stockholm.¹³ In February 1943 (during the surrender of the Von Paulus Army in Stalingrad) in Switzerland secret talks were held between a special representative of the U.S. government A. Dulles and the Nazi emissary, Prince Hohenlohe. In the course of these the question was discussed of the possibility of concluding a separate peace.¹⁴ During the summer and autumn of 1943, there were more frequent confidential meetings between the Nazi diplomats and the U.S. and British emissaries in Spain and Switzerland. The Vatican connection was used particularly actively for these purposes. The German Ambassador E. Weizsacker conducted talks with the ambassadors of the Western powers.¹⁵ Other attempts were undertaken to

achieve a second peace with the Soviet Allies and prevent the opening of a second front in Europe. And now, four decades later, the West is endeavoring to distort these historical facts in order to whitewash modern imperialism, to conceal its reactionary, aggressive essence and spread mistrust for the policy of the CPSU and the Soviet government.

The falsifying of events related to the opening of a second front is also expressed in the fact that the bourgeois authors of recent works on World War II history have made it seem that there was no problem over the precise date of opening a second front in Western Europe. Thus, S. Salzberger in his book "Such a Peace" has asserted that it makes no sense now to go back to the debate over the date for opening the second front.¹⁶ Quite the contrary, it does make sense. It is essential to show the unseemly role of those Western leaders who in every possible way put off the opening of a second front, pursuing primarily their own imperialist, hegemonistic goals. Salzberger and historians like him have endeavored to conceal from new generations of people the reasons that the ruling circles of the United States and England delayed in opening a second front in Northern France in 1942-1943. In every possible way they endeavor to whitewash the policy of the Western Powers, a criminal, narrow-class policy of Anglo-American imperialism, the essence of which was so clearly expressed by H. Truman in his credo: Let them (that is, the USSR and Germany) exhaust each other as much as possible.

During the war years, the question of the date of opening a second front was of exceptionally important political and military significance. The USSR, as is known, had already set this for July 1941. Subsequently, in the meetings of Soviet representatives with the English and American leaders, in principle it was agreed to establish a second front against Nazi Germany in 1942. On 1 June 1942, F. Roosevelt informed the Soviet government that he "definitely was counting on opening a second front in 1942."¹⁷ And the United States actually began to concentrate expeditionary forces on British territory (it was planned to have up to a million men here). But Washington and London did not carry out the assumed obligation and did not open a front of armed combat in Western Europe either in 1942 or in 1943 for reasons related to the far-reaching imperialist, anti-Soviet ideas of the reactionary forces.

Having brought about a fundamental change in the course of the war, the USSR in 1943 as before continued to seek coordinated actions by the Allied countries for quickly defeating the common enemy. In particular, at the Moscow Conference for the Soviet, U.S. and British Foreign Ministers (19-30 October 1943) and the Tehran Conference for the Heads of the Three Allied Powers (28 November-1 December 1943), the Soviet representatives insisted that the Allied Powers precisely designate a date for opening a second front.¹⁸ The United States and Great Britain were forced to give assurances that they would open a second front in Northern France in 1944. At the meeting of the leaders of the three Allied Powers in Tehran, the Western Allies assumed an obligation to cross the Channel in May 1944.¹⁹

But could the Allies have made a landing of major forces in France in 1943? Yes, they possessed the necessary resources for this. This is confirmed in the statements of a number of politicians and in the publications of prominent Western historians. For example, the American historian W. Dunn in the book "The Second

Front in 1943" assembled numerous facts showing the presence of the Allied material and technical capability for opening a second front in Western Europe in 1943. The work of his compatriot G. Bruce "Second Front Now!" also showed the fallaciousness of the official version in Washington and London of a "shortage of resources" for invading Northern France. The facts and figures given in the Bruce book objectively confirm that even in 1942 the United States and England possessed all the necessary forces for invading Northern France. Thus, at the end of 1942, the United States had 70 divisions and over 230 separate battalions equipped with modern equipment and weapons; England possessed in the homeland 30 divisions and 25 separate brigades and this surpassed the number of Wehrmacht divisions at that time in the West. The U.S. and English air forces had a predominant quantitative superiority. Most importantly, the United States and England had sufficient amphibious landing equipment to make a major landing on the French coast.²⁰

But why was the second front opened precisely in 1944 and not later?

Certain bourgeois historians have admitted that the second front at that time was more essential to the Western Allies than to the Russians.²¹ The moment had come, Bruce has commented, when a delay in opening a second front would mean an even greater loss for the West.²² However, Bruce and other bourgeois historians in their predominant majority say nothing of the fact that by the summer of 1944 a situation had developed which made it possible for the Soviet Union not only to drive out the Nazi invaders from its land but also without the aid of the Western Allies, in relying on the powerful Resistance Movement in the European countries, to complete the defeat of Nazi Germany and its satellites. Such a prospect frightened the U.S. and English monopolistic circles and caused them to hurry to open a second front in Normandy.

In the engagements of 1942-1943, the Soviet Army demonstrated its ability to win a victory in a duel with a strong enemy. The party Central Committee and the Soviet government set the task: "...To clear all our land of the Nazi invaders and to restore the state frontiers of the Soviet Union along the entire line from the Black Sea to the Barents Sea...to pursue the wounded German beast by its tracks and catch it...in its lair...to liberate from German captivity our brother Poles, Czechoslovaks and other Allied peoples of Western Europe...."²⁴ In accord with these goals, the Soviet Supreme High Command in the summer of 1944 was planning military operations with decisive goals. The ignoring of these facts in recent bourgeois publications is aimed at exaggerating the contribution of the Western Allied Troops to completing the defeat of the Wehrmacht. As is known, at the end of the war in the United States and Great Britain, the concluding of the defeat of the Nazi troops (June 1944-May 1945) was seen as the result of the joint efforts of the Allied Armies, the United States, USSR and Great Britain. Here the bourgeois historians then did not accentuate the problem of the ratio of the contributions of the Soviet-German Front and the second front. But now the bourgeois publications more and more often raise the question of the need for a clearer "allocation of roles" in completing the defeat of Germany.²⁵ Such a positioning of the question appears quite natural if it were an issue of the actual level of the contribution.

Certainly, a direct tie objectively existed between the Soviet-German and second front in Europe. But this can be viewed as a ratio of the main to the

particular, the crucial to the secondary. And this is precisely how it was seen during those years by U.S. officials and military leaders. The secret correspondence of D. Eisenhower contains the following assessment relating to January 1945: "The victories of the Red Army over the 3.5 years of war...had enormous significance for the cause of the United Nations."²⁶ As for the so-called "crucial role" of the United States about which the bourgeois historians write so tenaciously in recent American publications, this did not and could not exist. This is confirmed by the fact that the total number of English, Canadian and French troops and the troops of the other U.S. Allies fighting on the second front at the end of 1944 reached the number of the American Expeditionary Forces in Western Europe. Consequently, if the problem is to be approached mathematically, then the United States can be assigned not more than one-half of the share of the contribution by the Western Allies to completing the defeat of the Wehrmacht. In truth, the American historians stubbornly avoid such analysis but this merely confirms the vulnerability of their concept.

The truth is that the final victory over the enemy was won by the joint efforts of the peoples and armies from the states of the anti-Hitler coalition. "We pay proper due," commented the member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Minister of Defense, Mar SU D. F. Ustinov, "to the contribution made by the armed forces of the United States, England, France and Canada and all the participants of the anti-Nazi underground and Resistance Movement who fought the Nazi invaders on the lands occupied by them."²⁷ The Soviet people have never forgotten the courage and heroism of the military formations of Poland and Czechoslovakia, the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, the popular revolts in Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria or the liberation struggle of the Albanian people and the Hungarian patriots.

The landing of the Allies in Normandy on 6 June 1944 was a major political event. There is no doubt that this operation by the U.S., English and Canadian Armed Forces was of strategic significance. However, there is the irrefutable truth that the Soviet Armed Forces played the main role in defeating the Nazi military machine in the concluding stage of the war in Europe.

The myth of the "crucial role" of the United States does not stand up if one turns to impartial statistics illustrating the distribution of the efforts of the Wehrmacht and its satellites by the start of the opening of the second front in Northern France. Thus, in June 1944, a total of 239.5 divisions were fighting on the Soviet-German Front and 85 divisions on the other fronts (France and Italy).²⁸ Also convincing is the scope of the armed struggle. For example, let us take the summer-autumn campaign of 1944. The Soviet Armed Forces conducted major offensive operations in Belorussia and the Baltic, in the Ukraine and Balkans, in Karelia and Poland.

For checking the Soviet troops in Belorussia which were advancing successfully, in the summer of 1944 the enemy committed an additional 2,100 combat aircraft.²⁹ From 25 June through 16 July, 15 new German divisions and 2 brigades were shifted into Belorussia.³⁰ A larger portion of these reserves had previously been in the occupied countries of Western Europe. This made it easier for the troops of the Western Allies to conduct further combat operations in Northern France. As a result of the Belorussian Operation, an enormous breach up to 400 km wide was formed in the enemy's strategic front. The losses of the major strategic enemy

grouping of the Army Group Center, commented Mar SU A. M. Vasilevskiy, were over one-quarter of all the enemy forces on the Eastern Front by the start of the summer-autumn campaign of 1944.³¹

In the course of all the Red Army offensive operations in the summer and autumn of 1944, the enemy lost 1.6 million soldiers and officers,³² 6,700 tanks and over 12,000 airplanes. The average monthly Wehrmacht losses on the Soviet-German Front in the second half of 1944 were over 200,000 men and were double the losses caused by all the Western Allied armies taken together. In June-December 1944, the German Supreme Command, regardless of the invasion of the American and English troops in Normandy, shifted 60 divisions and 13 brigades from the West to the Soviet-German Front. The shift in the reverse direction over the same time was just 12 divisions and 5 brigades.³³

Western historians avoid such comparisons. But it is essential to bear in mind that there was recognition of this question by U.S. officials. For example, President F. Roosevelt in a letter to I. V. Stalin on 21 July 1944, wrote: "The speed of advance of your armies is amazing...."³⁴ The U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen G. Marshall said in the autumn of 1944: "I have a feeling that the Russians are even content by our marking time by the Siegfried Line. One gains the impression that the inertia of their deep strikes can bring the troops to Berlin and possibly farther."³⁵

The Allied Troops were actually "marking time," although the overall strategic situation greatly favored the concluding of operations in Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands and the development of an offensive deep into Germany. In Western Europe, the U.S., English and French troops were opposed only by around one-third of the total number of the Wehrmacht, and these were basically poorly trained and insufficiently armed units and formations. According to the admission of the Nazi Field Mar Gen G. Kluge made in August 1944, this was "the inevitable consequence of the desperate situation in the East."

Thus, historical facts reliably confirm the direct dependence of the successes of the Allied offensive in Western Europe upon the development of the situation on the main Soviet-German Front. Even the very fact of the Allied landing in France was caused by the successful actions of the Soviet Army in the first half of 1944. To replenish the enormous losses on the Soviet-German Front, the Nazi leadership was forced to shift to the East 40 divisions and 4 brigades from Germany and the other Western European countries. This thwarted the plans of the Wehrmacht Command to establish powerful reserves to repel the expected invasion of the Allies in France.

Also decisive was the contribution of the Soviet Armed Forces in 1945 as the basic events in the final stage of the war in Europe occurred on the Soviet-German Front. By the start of 1945, 195.5 Wehrmacht divisions (along with Hungarian ones) were fighting here. On the European theater of war, Hitler could field only 107 divisions against the English, American and French troops.³⁶ In the course of the Budapest, Vistula-Oder, East Prussian, Eastern Pomeranian, Vienna, Western Carpathian, Moravska-Ostrava, Bratislav-Brno, Berlin and Prague Offensive Operations, the Soviet troops destroyed and captured over 150 enemy divisions. Moreover, during the surrender another 100 divisions laid down their arms.³⁷ From January through May the Wehrmacht lost more than 1 million killed

on the Eastern Front with around 30,000 field guns, more than 12,000 tanks and assault guns and 6,000 aircraft being captured.³⁸ These were the basic forces which the Nazi Command then possessed.

Thus, the fallaciousness of the version of the imperialist ideologists on the "crucial role" of the United States is fully confirmed by historical facts.

Bourgeois historians serve the reactionary forces which are not interested in an objective treatment of military history events. A recognition of the truth leads to a recognition of the invincibility of the new social and state system, socialism. This is why bourgeois propaganda rages so.

Recently in Western military historiography a significant place has been assumed by the version of the "liberation of Europe" by the U.S. Armed Forces. This false idea has been propagandized, for example, by the mentioned D. Middleton, in asserting literally the following: liberation started with the landing of the American troops in Normandy.³⁹ In the aim of strengthening the Atlantic solidarity of the NATO members, Western German historians have supported this falsehood. In the book "The Second World War," contrary to the truth, they assert that precisely "the hour of liberation for the suppressed peoples of Europe struck on 6 June 1944."⁴⁰

Again the true historical facts are overlooked. As is known, in Europe the Soviet Army completely or partially liberated the territory of 10 countries with a population of 113 million people, 507 cities and thousands of population points.⁴¹ Ignored are the views of authoritative leaders whose countries were liberated. Thus, Charles de Gaulle in December 1944 said: "The French know what Soviet Russia has done for them and know that precisely Soviet Russia played the main role in their liberation."⁴²

At the very time that the U.S. and English Expeditionary Forces were defeated in the Ardennes, the Soviet troops liberated Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, they brought military operations into German territory and approached the Austrian frontiers. The Soviet troops freed tens of millions of people from the fascist yoke, winning the universal respect and gratitude of the European peoples. On 20 January 1945, the Polish government sent to the Soviet Supreme High Command a telegram which stated: "The Polish people...will never forget that they received freedom and the possibility of restoring their own independent statehood due to the brilliant victories of Soviet arms and due to the abundantly shed blood of the heroic Soviet soldiers."⁴³

The great liberation mission of the Soviet Army during the years of World War II will never die out in the memory of the peoples. Magnificent monuments as an expression of gratitude to the Soviet Armed Forces which brought liberation from Nazism have gone up in many European countries. The flowers at their feet are not allowed to fade.

The instructive lessons of history serve as a severe warning to the U.S. and NATO imperialists. At the same time, they arm the peoples with confidence in the invincibility of socialism.

FOOTNOTES

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- ² K. U. Chernenko, "Speech to the Voters of the Kuybyshev Electoral District of Moscow on 2 March 1984," PRAVDA, 3 March 1984.
- ³ "Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence," London, 1975, p 256.
- ⁴ THE NEW YORK TIMES, 20 October 1955.
- ⁵ R. Weigley, "The American Way of War," New York, 1973, p 359.
- ⁶ G. Bruce, "Second Front Now! The Road to D-Day," London, 1979; W. Dunn, "Second Front in 1943," New York, 1981; C. Sulzberger, "Such a Peace: The Roots and Asher [sic] of Yalta," New York, 1982; D. Middleton, "Crossroads of Modern Warfare," New York, 1983.
- ⁷ A. Seaton, "The Fall of Fortress Europe 1943-1945," London, 1981, p 7.
- ⁸ MILITARY REVIEW, October 1983, p 47.
- ⁹ D. Middleton, op. cit., p 141.
- ¹⁰ H. Stimson and G. Bundy, "On Active Service in Peace and War," New York, 1948, p 219.
- ¹¹ D. Eisenhower, "Crusade in Europe," New York, 1951, p 79.
- ¹² "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 12, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1982, p 217.
- ¹³ VOPROSY ISTORII, No 4, 1983, p 150.
- ¹⁴ V. B. Ushakov, "Vneshnyaya politika gitlerovskoy Germanii" [Foreign Policy of Nazi Germany], Moscow, Izd-vo Instituta mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy, 1961, p 241.
- ¹⁵ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 8, 1977, p 457.
- ¹⁶ C. Sulzberger, op. cit., p 94.
- ¹⁷ J. Butler and J. Gwyer, "Bol'shaya strategiya. Iyun' 1941-avgust 1942" [Grand Strategy. June 1941-August 1942], abridged translation from the English, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1967, p 454.
- ¹⁸ "Moskovskaya konferentsiya ministrov inostrannykh del SSSR, SShA i Velikobritanii. 19-30 oktyabrya 1943 g." [Moscow Conference of Soviet, U.S. and British Foreign Ministers. 19-30 October 1943], Moscow, Politizdat, 1978, p 336.

- 19 "Sovetskiy Soyuz na mezhdunarodnykh konferentsiyakh perioda Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny, 1941-1945 gg." [The Soviet Union at International Conferences in the Period of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945], Collection of Documents, Vol 2, Tehran Conference for the Leaders of the Three Allied Powers of the USSR, United States and Great Britain (28 November-1 December 1943), Moscow, Politizdat, 1978, p 173.
- 20 G. Bruce, op. cit., pp 17, 43, 104.
- 21 A. Seaton, op. cit., p 70.
- 22 G. Bruce, op. cit., p 14.
- 24 I. Stalin, "O Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne Sovetskogo Soyuz" [On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1950, pp 145-146.
- 25 A. Seaton, op. cit., p 12.
- 26 "The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower. The War Years," 1-V-London, 1970, p 2239.
- 27 PRAVDA, 9 May 1977.
- 28 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 12, p 217.
- 29 "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuz 1941-1945. Kratkaya istoriya" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945. Concise History], 2d Edition, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1970, p 365.
- 30 "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuz 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Vol 4, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1962, p 190.
- 31 PRAVDA, 23 June 1969.
- 32 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 9, 1978, p 531.
- 33 "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy...", Vol 4, p 657.
- 34 "Perepiska Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov SSSR s prezidentami SShA i prem'yer-ministrami Velikobritanii vo vremya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [Correspondence of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers with the U.S. Presidents and British Prime Ministers During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], 2d Edition, Vol 2, Moscow, Politizdat, 1976, p 158.
- 35 G. Marshall, "Selected Speeches and Statement of General of Army," WASHINGTON, INFANTRY JOURNAL, 1945, p 129.
- 36 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 12, p 217.
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³⁸ Ibid., Vol 10, 1979, p 501.

³⁹ D. Middleton, op. cit., p 187.

⁴⁰ "Der Zweite Weltkrieg," Vol 3, Stuttgart, 1979, p 104.

⁴¹ "Osvoboditel'naya missiya Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil vo vtoroy mirovoy voyny" [Liberation Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in World War II], Moscow, Nauka, 1971, p 469.

⁴² "Sovetsko-frantsuzskiye otnosheniya vo vremy Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [Soviet-French Relations During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Documents and Materials], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1959, p 340.

⁴³ "Istoriya KPSS" [CPSU History], Vol 5, Book 1, Moscow, Politizdat, 1970, pp 603-604.

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ORGANIZATION OF CIVIL WAR FIELD STAFF DESCRIBED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 84 (signed to press 17 Apr 84) pp 83-87

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Lt Col V. Daynes: "The Organization and Work Methods of the Field Staff of the Republic Revolutionary-Military Council"]

[Text] One of the difficult tasks which had to be carried out during the years of the Civil War and military intervention was leadership over armed combat. Up to September 1918, this was concentrated in two bodies: the Higher Military Council and the Operations Section of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs. This created parallelism in the work and in a number of instances led to the issuing of contradictory instructions, to uncoordinated troop regroupings and to interruption in troop supply.

A major role in improving the activities of the higher military bodies was played by the Decree of the VTsIK [All-Russian Central Executive Committee] of 2 September 1918 on converting the country into a unified military camp and on establishing the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic [RVSR] and the position of Commander-in-Chief.¹ Under the RVSR a staff was organized and this was the operational working body of the Red Army High Command and on 8 November, on the basis of the RVSR Decree of 2 October was renamed the Field Staff. Its organizational structure during the war underwent repeated changes in accord with the demands of the armed struggle.

In 1918, the Field Staff included the following directorates: operational which had under it the directorate of the inspector for radio telegraph of the operational army; administrative-registration; military communications; the field directorate for aviation and navigation; registration (in charge of covert intelligence and counterintelligence); inspectors of artillery, engineers, military housekeeping and military medical; infantry.²

For improving the activities of the Field Staff, of important significance were the decisions of the 8th Party Congress held in March 1919 on the "reorganization of the Field Staff with the establishing of a closer tie with the fronts and their immediate leadership...."³ On the basis of these decisions, the Field Staff was moved from Serpukhov to Moscow while the registration directorate on 19 July and the central directorate of military communications on

31 July were put directly under the RVSR. Under the Field Staff, the following were created: the RVSR Secretariat on 13 August, the cavalry inspectorate on 31 August, the Signals Directorate of the Red Army on 20 October and then on 17 March 1920 the Inspectorate of Armored Units was formed while the Field Directorate for Aviation and Navigation on 25 March was reorganized as the Staff of the Red Army Air Force.⁴

During the Civil War the position of chief of the Field Staff was successively held by: N. I. Rattel', F. V. Kostyayev, M. D. Bonch-Bruyevich and P. P. Lebedev. They were all generals of the Old Army, they had completed the General Staff Academy and had great experience in working in high staff and command positions in the Old Army and the Red Army.

All activities by the co-workers of the Field Staff were under the supervision of the military commissars of the Field Staff, including: V. G. Sharmanov, K. F. Fominov, S. I. Aralov, S. I. Gusev, D. I. Kurskiy and K. Kh. Danishevskiy. They not only supervised the military specialists but were also concerned with the political indoctrination of the co-workers and participated in settling operational questions. Operational documents could not be carried out without their signature.

Direct responsibility for organizing the work of the Field Staff bodies was born by its chief. The questions of supply, rear services and troop inspecting were settled by his assistant and this made it possible for the chief of the Field Staff "to concentrate on purely operational questions and the higher directing of the activities of the bodies subordinate to him."⁵ He coordinated the activities of the chiefs of the directorates and determined the place and time of their reports, the completion dates and the procedure for working out the basic planning documents, the methods of issuing the missions to the troops and so forth.

The basic efforts of the Field Staff were aimed at resolving questions related directly to the preparation and conduct of military operations. The specific features of the Civil War in which, according to the definition of V. I. Lenin, the number and composition of persons involved on both sides was hard to estimate,⁶ confronted the military command with completely new tasks in the planning area. Strategic planning was carried out on the basis of the political views of the higher party and state bodies.

One of the most important functions for the staff was the constant collection and analysis of information on the situation at the fronts. This was carried out by the co-workers of the Operations and Registration Directorates. The situational data were received from various sources: the operational and intelligence summaries, the reports from the fronts and armies, intercepted enemy telegrams, clandestine information and so forth. A very valuable channel of information was the reports of the inspectors of the branches of troops and they submitted information upon the assignment of the leadership or upon their own initiative.

The so-called "leading co-workers" of the staff or liaison officers who were assigned to each front (army) played a major role in organizing the prompt collection of information, in continuous contact with the troops and in supervising the issuing of directives and orders. On working maps they plotted the

situation for each field force, they requested lacking information, they analyzed data and compiled summaries on the basis of which a report was prepared for the Commander-in-Chief and the RVSR.⁷

A characteristic feature in the work of the Field Staff bodies was that its leadership, in preparing data for the Commander-in-Chief to take a decision for an operation, endeavored to consider the opinion of the commanders of the fronts (armies) and their chiefs of staff and sought a creative approach to carrying out the tasks.

In the work of the staff they employed administrative⁸ and consecutive methods of work, both independently and combined. The experience of the war showed that the administrative method was the basic one in the work of the Field Staff. The planning of an operation was carried out almost simultaneously at the Field Staff and the staffs of the fronts on the basis of preliminary instructions. The staffs of the fronts planned the operations without waiting for the work to be completed in the superior body.

In preparing for the operations, there was the widespread practice of having the Commander-in-Chief and the chief of the Field Staff travel to the fronts. For example, in October 1918, the chief of the Field Staff N. I. Rattel' visited the staff of the Northern Front where he discussed questions related to organizing the defense of Petrograd.⁹ Visits to the troops were also characteristic in the work of the Commander-in-Chief S. S. Kamenev and the chief of the Field Staff P. P. Lebedev. Thus, in October 1920, they visited the staff of the Southern Front for clarifying together with the front's commander M. V. Frunze and the chief of staff I. Kh. Pauka the operational plan to defeat the Vrangeli' army in Northern Tavria. As a total over the time he held the position of Commander-in-Chief, S. S. Kamenev visited the fronts 32 times while the chief of the Field Staff P. P. Lebedev did this more than 20 times.¹⁰ Such a method of work was caused by the need to increase the effectiveness of troop command and to coordinate the actions of the fronts and the armies as fully as possible. It had a positive effect also on the leadership of military operations and, as the experience of the war was to show, proved completely effective.

Sometimes the revolutionary-military councils [RVS] of the fronts, upon the request of the Commander-in-Chief, submitted their own proposals for conducting the forthcoming operations. Thus, upon the request of I. I. Vatsetis, the staff of the Southern Front on 30 October 1918 submitted the "Considerations on Going Over to the Offensive by the Southern Front Armies...."¹¹ In certain instances the commanders of the fronts submitted detailed proposals upon their own initiative. An example of this would be the reports from the Southern Front commander M. V. Frunze to the Commander-in-Chief of 11 October, as well as to the RVP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee, to V. I. Lenin and to the RVSR of 19 and 26 October 1920 on a plan for the counteroffensive in Northern Tavria.¹² These reports were reviewed at the Field Staff and submitted for approval to the Commander-in-Chief and to the RVSR. On 15 October 1918, the Commander-in-Chief I. I. Vatsetis, for example, reviewed the plan for the offensive operation by the Southern Front and sent a telegram to the front's commander V. V. Sytin approving it via the Field Staff.¹³ Here essential clarifications were sometimes incorporated in the plans of the fronts and measures were taken to coordinate their operations with adjacent field forces.

In certain instances the commanders of the field forces were summoned to the Field Staff. Thus, in November 1918, the chief of the Western Defensive Region A. Ye. Snegarev was summoned to Serpukhov where the Field Staff was located to discuss questions related to preparing to repel a possible attack by the German and White Guard troops.¹⁴

With sufficient time available for preparations, the fronts in advance received directives from the Commander-in-Chief and these indicated the goal of the operation, the missions of the troops, the cooperation procedures, the dates the troops were to be ready and the dates for submitting the plan for the operation. After this the commanders of the fronts and their staffs began planning the operation. For example, on 23 July 1919, the Commander-in-Chief S. S. Kamenev dispatched to the commanders of the Southern and Eastern Fronts a directive for preparing an operation to defeat the Denikin Troops.¹⁵

The Field Staff, after the Commander-in-Chief had taken a decision, worked out a plan for the operation which, as a rule, reflected the following: the enemy grouping, the balance of forces, the aim and concept of the operation, the sectors of the main and other attacks, the missions for the fronts (separate armies), the operational configuration of the troops, the composition and disposition of the reserves, questions of cooperation and so forth.¹⁶

After working out the plan for the operation, the chief of the Field Staff organized the issuing of the tasks to the troops. Usually the tasks were given to the fronts by presenting them with written directives which had been worked out by the operational directorate and signed by the Commander-in-Chief, one of the RVSR members or the military commissar of the Field Staff as well as by the chief of the Field Staff. In certain instances the tasks for the operation were given personally by the Commander-in-Chief or by the chief of the Field Staff during visits to the fronts as well as over communications equipment. However, all verbal instructions were duplicated by written documents.

The Field Staff exercised rigid control over the execution of the issued directives, instructions and plans for preparing for the operations. One of the methods of control was a visit to the troops by the Commander-in-Chief, the RVSR members, the chief and responsible co-workers of the Field Staff.

Also effective was such a method of control as the receiving of reports from the field force commanders on the carrying out of the issued tasks and instructions.

A study of the work experience of the Field Staff shows that in a majority of instances it successfully carried out the tasks entrusted to it. However, there also were mistakes in assessing the enemy forces and in the planning and control of the troops. These shortcomings were one of the reasons for the unsuccessful outcome of the counteroffensive by the Southern Front in August-September 1919 and the Warsaw Operation of the Western Front in July-August 1920.

Along with settling operational questions, in the work of the Field Staff great attention was given to studying the experience of the Civil War and introducing this into troop practices. On 12 December 1918, under the Operations Directorate of the Field Staff an Historical Information Department was established (from 8 May 1920, the historical information unit and later section¹⁷). The Field

Staff was also responsible for studying and systematizing the military statistical and military geographic materials as well as working out instructions and manuals on various questions of military affairs.

In 1918-1920, the co-workers of the staff worked out military-geographic and statistical descriptions of all the front field forces and a review of the area of military operations on the Eastern Front and prepared a sketch "The Influence of Climatic Conditions of the Volga-Kama System on the Spring (1919--V.D.) Operation of the Eastern Front," as well as strategic and concise essays on the combat operations of the Red Army and military history descriptions of a number of operations.¹⁸ During the same years, also worked out were the "Regulations on Organizing the Intelligence Service in the Worker-Peasant Red Army. Part 1. Troop Reconnaissance," the manual "Combat Employment of a Rifle Division and Higher Cavalry Formations," instructions for an armored train, landing and tank detachments, "Regulations on the Employment of Aviation in a War" and so forth. Simultaneously they began to publish individual documents of the military command. Among them of particular importance is the collection published for the 8th Congress of Soviets.¹⁹ A generalization of the combat experience and the introduction of it into practice had a great influence on the development of Red Army military art.

On the questions of organizing, forming, manning and training the Red Army, the Field Staff maintained close contact not only with Vseroglavshtab [?All-Russian Main Staff], but also with the people's commissariats of labor and railroads as well as other state departments and institutions. Already by 1 November 1918, the Administrative-Registration Directorate of the Field Staff had established the numerical size of the army and the reserve of the Commander-in-Chief and on 1 January 1919 introduced regular registration for the Army and Navy and by 19 February of the same year had worked out a new plan for organizing the Armed Forces.²⁰

Organizing the inspecting of troops both on the fronts and in the military districts also became one of the tasks for the Field Staff. This was carried out by the Directorates of Inspectors. Control was combined with helping the commands and staffs in eliminating the discovered shortcomings and in organizing field exercises. The inspectors, when necessary, personally directed weapons training, tactical exercises and military games and conducted procedural exercises with the command personnel.

An important condition for the successful activities of the Field Staff was the precise scheduling of its work. From 1000 to 1100 hours, the dutyman for the operations directorate reported to the chiefs of the Field Staff directorates the new situational data received during the night; from 1200 hours the directorate chiefs reported to the chief of the Field Staff. Reports to the Commander-in-Chief I. I. Vatsetis were made once during the day and once at night. The new Commander-in-Chief S. S. Kamenev introduced a different briefing schedule: at 1200 and 2400 hours, with the briefing at 2400 hours often lasting to 0300-0500 hours, as many questions piling up during the day had to be resolved. After receiving the instructions of the Commander-in-Chief, the Field Staff co-workers worked out and forwarded to the troops the directives, orders and instructions. A crucial moment in the work of the Field Staff was preparing for V. I. Lenin reports, maps showing the situation on the fronts,

excerpts from orders, operational and intelligence summaries, information on reserves and replacements being forwarded to the armies and diagrams for the disposition of the troops.²² "...V. I. Lenin," recalled S. S. Kamenev, "was daily shown summaries and often upon his request written reports were made by the RVS staff."²³

As a whole, the successful activities of the Field Staff were determined by the most effective structure of the directorates, sections and departments, by using effective work methods and by constant contact with the troops, the central and main bodies of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs, the state departments and institutions.

After the conclusion of the Civil War, V. I. Lenin commented: "The establishing of a military and state apparatus which was capable of victoriously enduring the hardships of 1917-1921 was a great undertaking...."²⁴ This can apply fully to the RVSR Field Staff. The experience of its work was employed in the interwar period as well as during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ "Direktivy Glavnogo komandovaniya Krasnoy Armii (1917-1920)" [Directives of the High Command of the Red Army (1917-1920)], Collection of Documents (below DGKKA), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1969, p 53.
- ² See: "Grazhdanskaya voyna i voyennaya interventsia v SSSR: Entsiklopediya" [The Civil War and Foreign Intervention in the USSR: An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1983, p 468.
- ³ "KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s"yezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK (1898-1970)" [The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums (1898-1970)], 8th Supplemented and Revised Edition, Vol 2, Moscow, Politizdat, 1970, p 71.
- ⁴ TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 6, inv. 4, file 1081, sheets 7-9.
- ⁵ Ibid., sheet 5.
- ⁶ See V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 12, p 49.
- ⁷ TsGASA, folio 6, inv. 4, file 70, sheet 1.
- ⁸ In the postwar period this method was called parallel.
- ⁹ TsGASA, folio 6, inv. 4, file 6, sheet
- ¹⁰ See: S. S. Kamenev, "Zapiski o grazhdanskoy voyne i voyennom stroitel'stve" [Notes on the Civil War and Military Organizational Development], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1963, pp 21-24; VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 4, 1972, p 62.
- ¹¹ TsGASA, folio 6, inv. 4, file 127, sheets 1-6.

- ¹² See: "Direktivy komandovaniya Krasnoy Armii (1917-1920)" [Directives of the Command of the Red Army Fronts (1917-1922)], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 442-443, 473, 485-486.
- ¹³ DGKA, p 85.
- ¹⁴ TsGASA, folio 6, inv. 4, file 6, sheet 345.
- ¹⁵ DGKA, pp 438, 439.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., pp 253, 256, 353-354, 429-433, 446-447, 577-580, 617-620, 681-682 and others.
- ¹⁷ TsGASA, folio 6, inv. 4, file 1081, sheets 15-17.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., sheets 32-34.
- ¹⁹ See: "Otchety ob operatsiyakh Krasnoy Armii i Flota za period s I/XII 1919 po 25/XI 1920. Sostavleno Polevym shtabom RVSR k VIII s"yezdu Sovetov, dekabr 1920" [Reports on Red Army and Navy Operations Over the Period from 1 December 1919 through 25 November 1920. Compiled by the RVSR Field Staff for the 8th Congress of Soviets, December 1920], Moscow, 1920.
- ²⁰ TsGASA, folio 6, inv. 4, file 1081, sheets 40, 41.
- ²¹ Ibid., folio 5, inv. 1, file 8, sheet 10; folio 108, inv. 1, file 298, sheet 73.
- ²² See: "Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biograficheskaya khronika" [Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biographic Chronicle], Vol 7, Moscow, Politizdat, 1976, pp 99, 117, 118, 181, 420, 532, 591, 593; Moscow, 1977, Vol 8, pp 69, 86, 178, 303, 399, 526 and so forth; TsGASA, folio 6, inv. 4, file 955, sheet 3.
- ²³ "Vospominaniya o Vladimire Il'iche Lenine" [Remembrances of Vladimir Il'ich Lenin], in 5 volumes, 2d Edition, Vol 3, Moscow, Politizdat, 1979, p 468.
- ²⁴ V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 44, p 106.

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BLACK SEA FLEET OPERATIONS IN KERCH LANDING TRACED

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[Article by Rear Adm G. Avraamov and Doctor of Historical Sciences, Capt 1st Rank (Res) G. Vaneyev: "Combat Operations of the Black Sea Fleet in the Kerch-Eltigen Landing Operations"]

[Text] The Kerch-Eltigen Operation (1943) is considered to be one of the major landing operations of the Great Patriotic War. Its overall plan envisaged a simultaneous landing of units of the 18th and 56th Armies by the Black Sea Fleet and Azov Naval Flotilla on the eastern coast of the Kerch Peninsula. After making pincer attacks from the regions to the northeast of Kerch and Eltigen, the landing troops were to capture the town and port of Kerch as well as the Port of Kamysh-Burun and ensure the crossing of the basic forces across the Kerch Strait. Subsequently, according to the plan approved by Hq SHC, the success was to be exploited on a western axis until the complete liberation of the Kerch Peninsula.

The landing force from the 56th Army (commander, Lt Gen K. S. Mel'nik) consisting of the 2d and 55th Guards Rifle Divisions and the 32d Rifle Division with reinforcements and under the cover of the 4th Air Army from the staging areas of Kuchugury, Kordon Ilich and Chushka Spit, was to land to the northeast and east of Kerch in the aim of seizing beachheads in the sector of Varzovka, Baksy and Opasnaya. The landing force from the 18th Army (commander, Lt Gen K. N. Leselidze) consisting of the 318th Rifle Division with reinforcements from the staging areas of Taman, Krotkovo and Lake Solenoye was to land to the south of the Port of Kamysh-Burun with the mission of capturing a beachhead on the sector Kamysh-Burun, Cape Takil.

The formations and units assigned for the landing and crossing on the Kerch Peninsula numbered around 130,000 soldiers, 2,032 guns and mortars, 148 rocket launchers, 125 tanks, 4,300 motor vehicles, 15,500 horses and a large amount of other military equipment and supplies.¹ The Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Flotilla assigned 278 ships and auxiliary vessels for delivering them to the coast of the Kerch Peninsula.²

From the 56th Army, the landing involved two (the 1st and 2d landing groups), and from the 18th Army, one (the 3d) landing group. Each of these included units

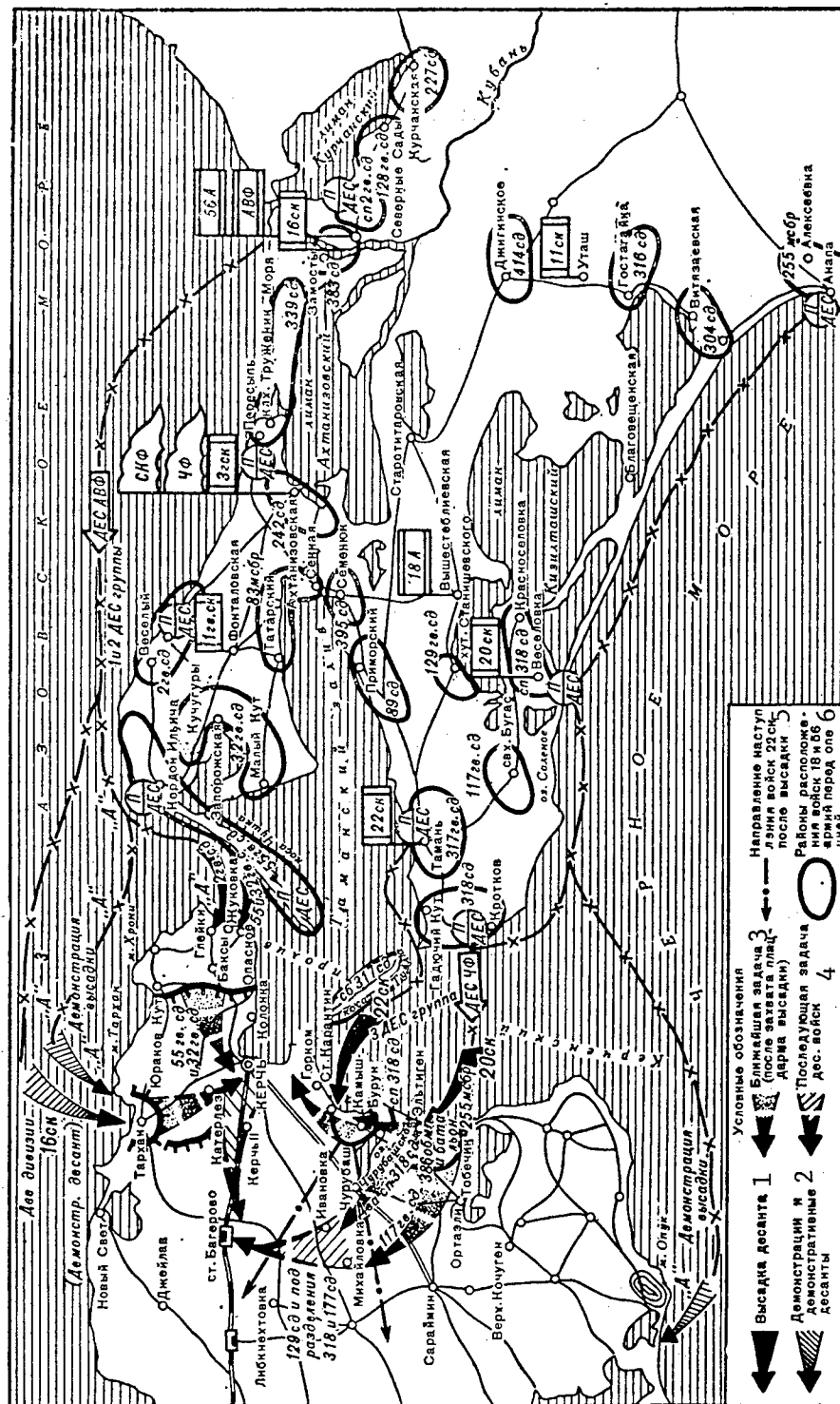
of naval infantry which previously had been repeatedly involved in landing operations. They were assigned for the first dash. The leadership of the 1st and 2d landing groups was entrusted to the commander of the Azov Flotilla, Rear Adm S. G. Gorshkov. The landing of the 3d landing group was under the leadership of the commander of the Novorossiysk Naval Base, Rear Adm G. N. Kholostyakov. Overall leadership over the landing operation was provided by the commander of the Northern Caucasus Front, Col Gen I. Ye. Petrov. The commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Adm L. A. Vladimirskiy, was his assistant for naval affairs.

For organizing party political work, the military council of the Black Sea Fleet assigned an operations group from the political directorate (more than 20 persons).

In carrying out the set missions an important role was assigned to the Black Sea Fleet. It was responsible for conducting intense reconnaissance both in preparing for the operation and during the move of the convoy; ensuring the landing forces with dependable defense at sea and during the landing; making pre-emptive strikes against the enemy aviation and ships which were resisting the landing; carrying out diversionary raids and attacks on the enemy bases and convoy. The fleet provided the troops of the Northern Caucasus Front with crossing equipment making it possible to create a strong first wave of the landing force, it significantly strengthened the fire power of the ground forces with the naval artillery while its naval infantry subunits took a direct part in the operation. The Black Sea pilots together with the pilots from the 4th Air Army provided an air cover for the troops which crossed the Kerch Strait.

The operation was prepared for quickly. Here they took into account the emergency measures being undertaken by the enemy to strengthen the Crimea's defenses. The antilanding defenses on the Kerch Peninsula included three lines extending from the Azov to Black Seas. They were a developed, well-built network of field works connected by numerous trenches and equipped with a large amount of anti-tank and antipersonnel obstacles. The eastern coast was particularly strongly fortified in sectors most suitable for a landing while the Kerch Strait and the approaches to it had been mined. In the ports of Kerch, Kamysh-Burun and Feodosiya were around 30 high-speed landing barges, 25 escort boats and 37 torpedo boats, 6 minesweepers and other armed ships and vessels.³

All of this required intensified daily combat activities of the fleet, a more active struggle on the enemy lines of communications and dependable defense for our own ships and vessels at sea. Continuous reconnaissance was conducted in preparing for the landing operation. They constantly considered the information received from the posts of the observation service and the clandestine agents. On Chushka and Tuzla Spits, positions were established for the artillery of both armies and the coastal mobile artillery of the fleet. In organizational terms all the artillery was put into two artillery support groups and subordinate to the army commanders. The troops underwent special landing training and learned to operate quickly, precisely and smoothly in loading on the ships and vessels and unloading from them. Conducted for the officer personnel was a joint group exercise "The Landing of a Tactical Amphibious Force on a Strongly Fortified Enemy Coast."



The 1943 Kerc'h-Eltigen Landing Operation

- 1--Landing of amphibious force
- 2--Feints and diversionary landings
- 3--Immediate task (after capturing landing beachhead)
- 4--Subsequent task of landing troop
- 5--Direction of offensive by troops of XXII Rifle Corps after landing
- 6--Positions of troops of 18th and 56th Armies before operation

Great attention was given to camouflaging the troops and the ships as well as to the navigational-hydrographic, engineer, logistic, medical and other types of support. Artillery and machine gun weapons were mounted on the vessels along with additional equipment for taking on equipment, and steel panels for the partial armoring of the superstructures.

The men from the engineer support showed creativity and initiative having made 34 rafts for transporting motor vehicles, artillery and tanks and having repaired and reequipped 153 landing vessels.⁴

As a whole the operation was ready, however a storm prevented its prompt start. The ships and vessels of the Black Sea Fleet (the 3d landing group) began to take on landing personnel only toward the evening of 31 October. The artillery softening up which lasted 15 minutes commenced when the landing force had reached the deployment line.

Around 0430 hours on 1 November, the landing commenced from the vessels of the first dash forces in the area of Eltigen and several minutes later in the region of Initsiativa Commune. At first the enemy did not put up resistance. But at 0520 hours, having detected the landing force, it opened up heavy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire against it. A significant portion of the vessels sustained damage and there were also losses in personnel.

By the night of 2 November, having overcome the enemy resistance in the battle for the landing, the first unit of landing forces from the 18th Army began to dig in on the captured beachhead. There was a delay in landing the remaining army forces. The small enemy combat ships (torpedo and escort boats), the self-propelled artillery landing barges and shore artillery put up fierce resistance. For this reason, the landing was completed on 3 November. By this time as a total it had been possible to move to the coastal sector in the area of Eltigen (now Geroyevskoye) a total of 9,418 men, 39 guns and 28 mortars as well as 257.2 tons of ammunition. The aviators of the fleet and the 4th Air Army delivered 350 tons of various cargo to the landing force.⁵

The ships and vessels of the Azov Flotilla on the first day succeeded in loading only a portion of the troops in the Port of Temryuk and from the pier of Peresyp. By the morning of 1 November, the deployment line was reached only by a little more than one-half of the ships and vessels engaged in the operation. The situation was difficult. The landing of the first and second groups of the landing force had to be deferred on this night and the ships returned to their base. Due to the fact that a portion of the boats and vessels during the storm had been put out of action, changes were incorporated in the initial plan. Since the existing vessels could not simultaneously take the units and subunits of the two rifle divisions, the transporting of them to the enemy coast was to be made in two waves: the first at 2200 hours on 2 November to the sector of Gleyki, Zhukovka, and the second at 0400 hours on 3 November to the sector of Opasnaya, Rybnyy promysel (Yenikale). Instead of seven landing detachments, only five were organized. At 1400 hours on 2 November all of them set out from Temryuk in a double column consisting of 32 vessels and ships. Some time later they were joined at sea by four assault groups of armored boats under the command of Capt-Lt S. I. Barbot'ko carrying the first dash subunits on board.

At 2202 hours, when the deployment of the ships and vessels on the starting line had been completed, 420 guns of field and coastal artillery and 2 regiments of rocket launchers began preparatory fire against the landing areas. Some 23 minutes later the fire was shifted 400 m into the enemy defenses and the naval infantry from the 369th Separate Battalion began landing from the armored launches which were conducting artillery and mortar firing. On 3 November the entire first detachment of the first landing group was on shore.

Three detachments of landing boats (the first, third and fifth) began transporting to the beachhead the remaining subunits of the 2d Guards Rifle Division from the area of Kordon Ilich and by 0500 hours of 3 November had completed this. The second landing group (the second and fourth detachments) began loading on the boats at 0120 hours. At 0435 hours, having landed the forward detachment of the second landing group, the ships and vessels returned to the piers of Chushka Spit. There they took on the remaining soldiers and by 0730 hours had delivered them to the coast. The landing of the force in the sectors of Gleyki, Zhukovka, Opasnaya, Rybnyy promysel also continued during the day of 3 November under the cover of smokescreens. On 6 November, the commander of the Northern Caucasus Front for ensuring systematic crossing of the strait established a special group for controlling the crossing. This included a chief (the commander of the Azov Flotilla) with three assistants, a staff, rear services and a technical section. In the aim of depriving the enemy ships of the possibility of breaking out of Kamysh-Burun to counter the crossing of our troops, special naval patrols were sent out and extensive use was made of the artillery emplaced on Tuzla and Chushka Spits. All of this helped to deliver to the beachhead 14,190 men and a great deal of equipment and food during 7-10 November.⁶

The amphibious force landed in the area of Eltigen on the morning of 1 November, having overcome heavy enemy fire resistance, initiated fierce battles to broaden the beachhead. The sailors from the 386th Separate Naval Infantry Battalion headed by the deputy commander for political affairs, Capt N. V. Rybakov, fought boldly and courageously.⁷ By 0800 hours, they had captured the northern outskirts of Eltigen and had reached Cape Kamysh-Burun. The second group of Sr Lt I. A. Tsibizov (subsequently Hero of the Soviet Union) cleared the Nazis out of the southern edge of the settlement and dug in on a group of burial mounds to the north of elev. 37.4. The landing troops under the command of Sr Lt B. M. Litovchak captured the burial mounds to the south of this elevation. The 613th Separate Special Company (commander, Sr Lt Ye. A. Guzik) attached to the battalion with two platoons reached the elevations to the southwest of Eltigen. Also participating in the first dash in this sector was the composite battalion of the 255th Separate Naval Rifle Brigade under the command of Maj S. T. Grigor'yev.⁸

From the second half of the day of 1 November, the enemy undertook a series of fierce attacks and our troops were forced to go over to the defensive. The aviation of the Black Sea Fleet provided them with effective support. During one of the enemy attacks on 3 November, the commander of the Air Squadron from the 47th Ground Attack Air Regiment, Lt B. N. Volovodov, and the navigator and squadron party organizer, Jr Lt V. L. Bykov, having used up their ammunition, landed a Ju-88, making a bombing run against our positions. The military council of the 18th Army in a special telegram to the commander of the fleet's air

forces expressed gratitude to the Black Sea pilots.⁹ In supporting the landing force, the coastal artillery also hit the enemy.

The sailors also fought actively. On 9 November, a detachment of torpedo boats (commander, Capt-Lt A. I. Kuderskiy, subsequently Hero of the Soviet Union) attacked the enemy ships in the Port of Kamysh-Burun and sunk two of them. Two high-speed barges sunk at sea were added to the combat score 2 days later by the crew of the escort boat under the command of Lt A. S. Markov who also subsequently was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Heavy battles were waged daily. In order to hold on to the captured beachhead, fresh forces were required but movements to the Eltigen beachhead had been virtually halted from 9 November due to the actions of the superior enemy blockade forces.

Toward the end of November, the situation of the landing group on the Eltigen sector was extremely difficult due to the growing sea blockade. The commander of the Separate Maritime Army ordered the commander of the landing of the third landing group (Rear Adm G. N. Kholostyakov) to evacuate the troops from the Eltigen beachhead. But due to the lack of vessels¹⁰ a decision was taken to break through and link up with the troops on the Yenikale Peninsula.

During the night of 7 December, having silently removed the enemy outposts, our troops crossed the swamp and reached the area of Kamysh-Burun. At 0430 hours, they assembled at the foot of Mount Mitridat from where they attacked the enemy and by 0700 hours had captured the Mitridat Hills (to the south of the suburbs of Kerch) and Ugolnaya harbor. Individual groups broke into the city, they crossed the Nazi battle formations and linked up with the units of the Separate Maritime Army.¹¹ But the remainder at dawn under any pressure retreated to the shore of Kerch Bay and took up the defensive in a small area of the port. To reinforce them on 8-9 December, two detachments of ships and vessels from the Azov Flotilla delivered 769 soldiers and officers from the 305th and 144th Battalions of the 83d Separate Naval Infantry Brigade.¹² On the return trips they evacuated more than 650 wounded soldiers from the 318th Rifle Division and naval infantrymen. But the forces were unequal. It was impossible to hold the captured beachhead and a decision was taken to evacuate the remaining landing forces.

An evacuation detachment from the Azov Flotilla under the command of Capt 3d Rank F. V. Tetyurkin during the night of 10 December, under an artillery and air cover, reached the coast, took on 1,080 men of the landing force and by 0900 hours on 10 December returned to Opasnaya Bay.¹³

The subunits and units landed to the northeast and east of Kerch continued to hold the beachhead on the Crimean land. They were actively assisted by the "Kerch Crossing" which was organized in the course of the landing operation. Having crossed the minefields and under enemy artillery fire, and with icy conditions our ships and vessels for several months delivered everything necessary across the strait.

Thus, the landing of our troops at two points at different times led to a situation where the enemy was able first to isolate the landing force of the 18th

Army and then check the offensive of the 56th Army. Although the set goal was only partially achieved in the Kerch-Eltigen Operation, it was of important significance. As a result an important operational beachhead was secured and this ensured the concentration of the men and weapons and their preparation for defeating the Crimean enemy grouping.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ TsVMA [Central Naval Archives], folio 10, file 17992, sheet 57.
- ² V. M. Kononenko, "Kerchensko-El'tigenskaya desantnaya operatsiya" [Kerch-Eltigen Landing Operation], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1954, p 24.
- ³ In the course of the Kerch-Eltigen Landing Operation, the maneuverable enemy naval forces were reinforced with 60 high-speed landing barges from Sevastopol, "Party Archives of the Crimean Obkom of the Ukrainian Communist Party," folio 156, inv. 1, file 577, sheet 4; V. M. Kononenko, op. cit., p 14.
- ⁴ "Krym v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne Sovetskogo Soyuz 1941-1945 gg" [The Crimea in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Simferopol, Krymizdat, 1963, p 266.
- ⁵ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 7, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 236.
- ⁶ TsVMA, folio 55, file 5781, sheet 120; file 5782, sheet 53.
- ⁷ Ibid., folio 1093, inv. 017271, stor. unit 767, sheet 1. The battalion commander, Maj N. A. Belyakov, was able to land on the beachhead only at the end of the day of 1 November. The chief of staff of the battalion, Sr Lt I. V. Zhenovoy, was wounded in the crossing at sea.
- ⁸ TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense], folio 2055, inv. 2, files 13, 14, 15 and others.
- ⁹ "Partpolitrabota v aviatsionnykh podrazdeleniyakh Chernomorskogo flota v period boyev za Krym" [Party Political Work in the Air Subunits of the Black Sea Fleet During the Period of the Battles for the Crimea], Moscow, Voenmorizdat, 1945, p 37.
- ¹⁰ TsVMA, folio 10, file 32724, sheets 166-167.
- ¹¹ Ibid., folio 1093, inv. 017271, stor. unit 767, sheet 18.
- ¹² Ibid., folio 10, file 11029, sheets 4-6.
- ¹³ TsAMO, folio 1890, inv. 1, file 41, sheet 129; TsVMA, folio 10, file 11029, sheet 8.

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BOOK ON DEVELOPMENT, USE OF ALL-ARMS EXERCISES REVIEWED

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[Review by Hero of the Soviet Union, Army Gen P. Lashchenko of the book "Obshchevoyskovyye ucheniya" (All-Arms Exercises), by M. A. Gareyev, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, 254 pages]

[Text] In carrying out the responsible task of further increasing troop combat readiness, the primary role is played by the greatest possible improvement in the troop training methods. The combat training methods, as is known, have developed in accord with the development of military affairs and with the appearance of new types of weapons and combat equipment and more effective methods of the combat employment of the branches of troops. And this necessitates an ongoing improvement in the procedural skills of our command personnel who are the organizers of the training process in the troops.

As historical experience indicates, the most advanced and effective form of troop training is tactical, all-arms exercises. In these all the procedures of conducting modern combat and the actions of the commanders and command bodies are honed in a situation as close as possible to actual combat.

The recently published book by Doctor of Military Sciences, Col Gen M. A. Gareyev [the book reviewed] is devoted to the timely problem of preparing and conducting all-arms exercises. It sets out the experience of the training of troops both in the Russian Army and in the USSR Armed Forces from the moment of their birth to the present day.

In bringing out the essence of this diverse problem, the author provides a good historical review of the rise, development and establishing of such forms of troop training as exercises and maneuvers. He analyzes in detail in what manner exercises in the Russian Army acquired their fundamental distinction from exercises in the armies of the other European states as well as the content and focus in the age of the changes of Peter the First. "The parade grounds drill and the instructing of troops in the routine employment of line battle formations," the book states, "as practiced in the Western European mercenary armies were not suitable for the Russian Army" (p 17). Peter the First, as the author goes on to emphasize, was the first in Russian history to introduce such an advanced form of combat training as exercises. This underwent further development during the times of Suvorov and Kutuzov and was improved at the end of the 19th

and the beginning of the 20th Centuries with the participation of many progressive Russian military figures.

A new step in the development of military affairs was the organizing of troop training and the combat training of personnel in the world's first worker and peasant army created by Great October. Precisely during these times, when under the leadership of V. I. Lenin the party began to establish a regular Red Army, there was a complex process of working out the training system in the troops. The principles established then for the combat training of the army became that foundation on which the combat skill of the Soviet military constantly grew and was improved and their readiness to defend the socialist fatherland increased.

All of this and each of the major stages in the establishing and development of the Red Army troop training system are described in detail in a special chapter "The Conducting of Exercises and Maneuvers in the Soviet Army" which is informative and full of numerous instructive examples from troop practices. Particular attention should be given to those pages which describe the experience of conducting all-arms exercises during the years of the Great Patriotic War directly on the front, before the start of the offensive operations. As the book emphasizes, a profound analysis and creative employment of the conclusions from the experience of the Great Patriotic War comprise one of the most important sources for the development of Soviet military science and military art and for increasing the combat readiness of the Armed Forces at the present stage.

Naturally, the basic content of the book "Obshchevoyskovyye ucheniya" is comprised of chapters disclosing the preparations for the all-arms exercises and the method of conducting them. The author provides a clear classification for exercises by their purpose and the involved forces as well as for basic and additional tasks. His arguments and conclusions are reinforced by specific examples from the practice of conducting the all-arms exercises in the Soviet Army in the postwar years, including such ones as "Zapad-81" [West-81] and others.

The book gives a great deal of attention to preparing the umpire personnel and the functioning of them at the exercises. This, as is known, is a complex, creative process. The author is completely right when he emphasizes that "it is essential that the umpires have good operational-tactical and procedural training and possess great keenness of observation, initiative and objectivity of judgments" (p 151).

Active and purposeful party political work is the guarantee for the carrying out of the tasks by the personnel in the all-arms exercises. And it is quite natural that the book gives a significant place to this in the form of a section in each of the basic chapters.

The historical approach to the designated problem and a profound analysis of the instructive experience of the past have made it possible for the author to critically assess the organization of exercises in the troops at present, and to note the shortcomings existing in this responsible matter. He validly criticizes, for example, the infatuation with building all sorts of towers for observing the course of the exercises (p 191).

The book "Obshchevoyskovyye ucheniya" contains valuable procedural material which, undoubtedly, will be of great help to our command personnel in improving the tactical and operational training of the troops and for the command bodies of all levels. Without exaggeration it can be said that this work will become a desk reference for each person who organizes and conducts tactical exercises in the troops. The recommendations contained in it are of great practical value. However, the reviewed book must not be viewed solely as a procedural text. It is an analytical work which studies the entire development of such a major form of troop training as all-arms exercises and on the basis of historical experience discloses the basic patterns of this complex process, the demands made upon further improving the methods of conducting exercises and the bringing of them as close as possible to the probable conditions of a future war if the imperialists succeed in unleashing it.

For this reason, it is completely justified for the book to include a special chapter on the exercises and maneuvers in the NATO armies. This systematizes the experience of conducting combined-arms exercises in the armed forces of the member countries of the aggressive North Atlantic bloc. Such information, undoubtedly, will be very useful for the Soviet military reader. A detailed analysis of conducting such exercises overseas makes it possible to spot already apparent trends in the armies of our probable enemies in organizing the offensive and defensive as well as employing tactical nuclear weapons. All of this is essential to consider them in preparing and conducting the all-arms exercises and thereby minimizing any sort of conditionality and to avoid weaknesses and oversimplification in the tactical training of the troops.

The style of exposition for the material in the book is popular, accessible and persuasive and this will make it possible for the readers, including young officers, to rather easily assimilate its content and use the valuable experience included in it in practice. The reviewed work will help evoke an interest in the methods of combat training and in increasing the creative activity of the officers in training and indoctrinating the personnel.

The contents of the book is marked by a diversity of problems raised and by an examination of them in close relation to the historic task and the prospects for the development of military art over the next few years. It arms our officers and generals with a knowledge of the laws of improving combat training, as the main condition for an on-going rise in the combat capability and combat readiness of the troops.

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